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ABSTRACT

Growing consensus among experts holds that youth who come under court supervision have multiple issues that require comprehensive and coordinated services and strategies to help them prepare for and attain jobs at wages that will sustain a constructive life path. A comprehensive approach, in theory, reduces dependency and breaks the pervasive cycle of crime and recidivism often experienced by youthful offenders and others who are at risk of court involvement. A significant effort to identify promising practices that have the potential to help prepare youthful offenders for employment was the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP), a 24-month-long pilot that began in the summer of 1999. The goal of the evaluation was to document the implementation process over the demonstration period. The evaluation was to note achievements and challenges as project staffs attempted to deliver integrated services to the target population. To the extent possible, the evaluation also was to report the outcomes of the projects' efforts to transition youth offenders and youth at risk of becoming court involved to full-time employment at livable wages in positions with career potential. This volume describes, assesses, and summarizes the findings. A major part of the evaluation focuses on the extent that the projects were effective in building upon existing programs and systems to serve targeted youth. Five appendixes contain the solicitation for grant applications; scope of the work; field research guide; Category I Final Report Summaries; and Category III Final Report Summaries. (Contains 16 references.) (GCP)

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YOUTH OFFENDER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROCESS EVALUATION (Final Report)

April 2002

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Preface

Growing consensus among experts holds that youth who come under court supervision have multiple issues that require comprehensive and coordinated services and strategies to help them prepare for and attain jobs at wages that will sustain a constructive life path. A comprehensive approach, in theory, reduces dependency and breaks the pervasive cycle of crime and recidivism often experienced by youthful offenders and others who are at risk of court involvement.

Most of these youth live in or will return to their communities early in their lives. Developing capacity to meet their needs while also directing them along constructive paths is an essential investment in them and in a community's social and economic strength. Indeed, research demonstrates that economic self-sufficiency is a protective factor that helps reduce or prevent juvenile delinquency in communities (Brown, et. al., 2001).

A significant effort to identify promising practices that have the potential to help prepare youthful offenders for employment was the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP), a 24-month-long pilot that began in the summer of 1999. The project found the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (DOL) collaborating with the Department of Justice/Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

To test various approaches and strategies that may work toward this end, DOL contracted with Research and Evaluation Associates, Inc., an applied research firm in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Washington, DC, to conduct an implementation, or process, study of 12 of the 14 projects that had been selected for the demonstration. At the same time, OJJDP awarded another firm a contract to evaluate the remaining two projects.

The goal of the evaluation conducted by Research and Evaluation Associates was to document the implementation process over the demonstration period. The evaluation was to note achievements and challenges as project staffs attempted to deliver integrated services to the target population. To the extent possible, the evaluation also was to report the outcomes of the projects' efforts to transition youth offenders and youth at risk of becoming court involved to full-time employment at liveable wages in positions with career potential.

This volume describes, assesses, and summarizes our findings. A major part of the evaluation focuses on the extent that the projects were effective in building upon existing programs and systems to serve targeted youth.

Although the YODP tested a variety of service delivery strategies in a diverse set of communities, ultimately the demonstration's purpose was to deduce effective practices that may have universal application. As part of the effort to do this, the evaluation and technical assistance teams and the DOL staff identified a set of nine effective organizational attributes shared by the most successfully implemented demonstration projects. These were incorporated into a public management model, which offers an approach that has shown to be effective in administering programs targeting youth offenders and youth at risk of court or gang involvement.

While the project does not prescribe one specific service strategy, it reflects the hypothesis that organizations that structure their work around the public management model will be better able to formulate and implement an effective service delivery strategy that responds to a community's particular needs. Specifically, the public management model is expected to assist projects to: (a) assess the needs of their community; (b) identify key stakeholders and partners integral to the success of the programs; (c) map and access resources within the community; and (d) better implement an effective integrated service strategy tailored to meet the community's specific needs. The public management model will be further developed and refined during future demonstrations.

Although the demonstration project continues with an additional round through December 2003 and perhaps beyond, the report's major findings for the initial round have indicated:

- Partnerships between youth offender agencies and workforce development agencies provide an important connection that can further each agency's mission.
- The partnerships are likely to continue and the YODP was the instrument for this breakthrough.
- Youth indicated that the promise of jobs at a decent wage is what drew them to the local projects and it is what kept them engaged with the projects.
- Use of a crime prevention model that includes employment, training, and placement services appears critical for these youth.
- The project's promise and ability to help youth transition to employment was a major feature that led many probation officers to refer youth to local projects.
- It may take additional time to demonstrate that an investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders, or youth at risk of criminal involvement, successfully transitioning to full-time employment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Congress set aside $13.1 million in the Department of Labor's Pilot and Demonstration budget in the 1998 Program Year for programs to address the needs of youth who were, had been, or were at risk of coming under juvenile justice supervision. The Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) collaborated with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the Department of Justice (DOJ) in announcing solicitation SGA/DAA 98-015. The solicitation for grant proposals focused on projects designed to get youth at risk of criminal involvement, youth offenders, and gang members between the ages of 14 and 24 into long-term employment at wage levels that would prevent future dependency and would break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency.

In June 1999, DOL funded 14 sites for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) proposed by governmental units, either cities or states. The projects fell into one of three categories:

- **Category I - Model Community Projects** were set in high-poverty neighborhoods where comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth already had been established:

  (1) Denver, Colorado;

  (2) Houston, Texas;

  (3) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;

  (4) Richmond, California; and

  (5) Seattle, Washington.

- **Category II - Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiatives** provided comprehensive school-to-work education and training within juvenile correctional facilities as well as follow-up services and job placement when youth left correctional facilities and returned to their home communities:

  (1) Columbus, Ohio;

  (2) Indianapolis, Indiana; and

  (3) Tallahassee, Florida.

- **Category III - Community-wide Coordination Projects** worked with local youth service providers to develop linkages that strengthened the coordination of prevention and aftercare services for youth in small to medium-size cities with high poverty and high crime:

  (1) Clifton, New Jersey;

  (2) Bakersfield, California;

  (3) Knoxville, Tennessee;

  (4) Minneapolis, Minnesota;

  (5) Pensacola, Florida; and

  (6) Rockford, Illinois.

The projects were to operate for 24 months from the time of contract negotiation, generally from summer 1999 until summer 2001. The first six months were for planning. The remaining 18 months were for implementation.

In May 1999, Research and Evaluation Associates received a task order from DOL/ETA to provide a process evaluation of 12 of the 14 projects. Two Category II sites, Tallahassee and Indianapolis, were to be evaluated under a separate DOJ agreement.

The goal of the process evaluation was to document the implementation process of the projects, noting achievements and challenges as project staff attempted to deliver integrated services to the target population. To the extent possible, the evaluation also was to report the outcomes of the projects' efforts to transition youth offenders and youth at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile and criminal justice systems to full-time employment at livable wages in positions with career potential.

The social-development strategy assumed by the YODP design was based on understanding the concepts of risk and protective factors. Common risk factors, such as availability of drugs, lack of commitment to school, family management problems, and early academic failure, were useful in predicting behavior problems. Research revealed that the more risk factors present, the greater the risk of juvenile problem behavior. Protective factors included "healthy beliefs and clear standards for productive, law-abiding behavior, and bonding with adults who adhere to these beliefs and standards." (Steiner, 1994)

Certain questions about the demonstration projects were included with the Scope of Work for the process evaluation. The evaluation team organized the questions into 10 major questions with general and category-specific sub-questions. The 10 questions were organized in a systems-flow model based on the work of Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) that considered: **C**ontext, **I**nputs, **P**rocess, and **P**roducts (CIPP). The ordered set of questions became the Field Guide for structuring three evaluation site visits to each project. For the Final Report, evaluators compared the original proposals and reports of the three visits to each project site, analyzing the data according to the 10 questions developed for the Field Guide.

Summary findings are reported below for each category of projects. The final section lists the lessons learned during the demonstration project.

Category I: Model Community Projects

Category I grant awards were given to set up a combination of gang prevention and suppression projects; alternative sentencing and community service projects for youth offenders; and to support existing case management and job placement services for youth on probation or returning to the community from corrections facilities.

Some generalizations can be made about the five Category I Model Community Projects:

- All five cities where the projects operated had alternative sentencing options for youth in place before the YODP project was funded.
- The projects reported that the YODP funding opportunity fit their vision for the youth of their cities.
- Gang activity meant different things in different communities, but all projects reported significant gang activity in target neighborhoods.
- The economies where the projects were established were strong and diversified. There also was a strong demand for entry-level workers.
- Political support for the projects in all five communities was good.

Findings for Category I Projects

Planning the Project

Each grantee had a project plan; yet not all plans included all dimensions of the integrated services demonstration. These included employment and training for youth offenders and youth at risk of court supervision, gang prevention and suppression, alternative sentencing and community service, and aftercare for youth returning from incarceration.

For several projects, the YODP funding opportunity fit into their community's plan for youth employment. And, to some extent, all the cities saw the funding as a way to strengthen and supplement existing programs. Plans evolved considerably during the first two years of implementation as various aspects of the plans proved unworkable or as situations changed.

Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships

The projects were designed to build onto and expand existing partnerships for serving target youth. At least some partners in each city had collaborated prior to the YODP. Over the duration of the projects, those partnerships changed and/or expanded. In several project communities, implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the award of other youth employment grants transformed their entire youth employment operation and processes.

Organizational Issues

Grantees varied in how they organized their projects. And, the role of the grantee agency appeared to make a crucial difference in the implementation process. Some organizations contracted out the entire operation while others kept service delivery inside the grantee organization. The projects seemed best served when the operation was handed off to contractors, but the grantee stayed involved for leadership, facilitation, and guidance.

The relationships that have been most mutually beneficial have been those between courts and probation officers, on the one hand, and employment and training agencies, on the other. Developing the trust of the courts and probation departments took time, however, and projects lacking that experience needed to devise and employ a strategy for winning their confidence.

The value of delivering youth employment services through partnerships was demonstrated in tangible, measurable ways and also in more subtle exchanges of resources and experience. Partners in several projects leveraged tangible exchanges that made their partnership mutually beneficial.

For other projects, the mutual learning and the ability to benefit from a partner's special strengths and experience led to less tangible but important resources to the partnership.

The least-developed relationships were with school districts and employers. The youth involved in the projects generally had not been successful in school and had been in trouble for behavior problems. Frequently schools did not want them to return, nor did the youth want to return to traditional schools. Several projects did, however, develop effective working relationships with schools during the demonstration period.

In general, employer networks were not used — even when employers had agreed to be part of the project network — because youth lacked work maturity and essential educational, life and vocational skills for all except the most low-skill level positions. Each project was asked to use the Federal Bonding Program, but virtually no Model Communities youth were bonded as part of the YODP.

Training, Employment, and Gang Suppression Activities

Training youth offenders and youth in danger of criminal activity with the goal of preparing them for the workforce was an innovation in the care of youth offenders in all five projects. The intensive case management the projects offered through the employment training delivery system was also an innovation in the services they offered them. Probation and court staff remarked that the demonstration project provided every youth a relationship with at least one additional supportive adult. Intensive case management and employment training were the principal components of the YODP aftercare model.

Services provided project participants, whether called by the same name or not, always included:

- intake and assessment;
- case management;
- support for earning a high school diploma or GED certificate;
- work readiness and soft skills training;
- barriers to work (child care, transportation, tattoo removal);
- subsidized work experience;

- job-search support;
- job development;
- job-placement support; and
- post-placement follow-up.

While gang activity was part of the projects' awareness, the gang dimension rarely was an overt factor in project programming. Gang-reduction activity through the projects stemmed primarily from diversionary tactics. Youth were kept busy during the normal work week with a combination of schooling, work readiness classes, subsidized employment, and then unsubsidized employment.

Collateral Services

All projects appeared dismayed by the deep and varied needs of project clients. There were staffing and budget implications of realizing that maturity, academic standing, work skills and life skills needed to be developed before youth could hold jobs. Project staff made valiant efforts to obtain some of these services for project youth. The process of meeting multiple needs demonstrated, however, the need for a more-systematic collaboration between the projects and the health and mental health systems.

Staff Recruitment

None of the projects was without experience in serving youth, which provided an important boost for the projects. Hiring at the direct-service delivery level was needed, however, and retaining these new staff members was a problem faced by most projects. Training was reported to be helpful for the projects, but staff turnover meant that awareness of larger project goals was not always maintained.

Target Population Recruitment

With the exception of Seattle and Philadelphia, the projects planned to recruit youth for the entire age range, 14-24, in a single program of services. As the projects evolved, however, staff learned that the needs of youth varied considerably across those years. Furthermore, and to the surprise of the projects, a larger number of younger youth were recruited than older youth. Younger youth needed more support time before they were prepared for formal work settings, and there was a greater urgency to try to get them into and/or keep them in school. Seattle and Philadelphia had proposed different strategies for older and for younger youth.

Most youth in the majority of projects were referred by courts or by probation officers. All projects also recruited youth directly from target neighborhoods.

Technical Assistance

All project teams participated in two conferences sponsored by DOL and hosted by Research and Evaluation Associates. One conference was in Washington, DC, in September 1999, the other was in Tampa, Florida, in February 2000. Some sessions of the conferences were for projects from all three categories, others were held for category-specific projects. These sessions addressed common issues and questions raised by project staff.

Projects requested and received site-specific assistance to help them improve their operations. All projects found that organizational cultures impeded efforts for cross-agency partners to work as a team. Help clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountability paths was important technical assistance provided to the staffs of all projects. Conference calls held for each category of projects generated peer-developed problem-solving among projects as well.

Sustainability

Aspects of each project were likely to continue after grant funding ended. Some partners would continue to collaborate. And, court-probation and employment training agency partnerships were likely to continue because they had become mutually beneficial. Court-supported services in every city would continue and could leverage some services for court-supervised youth in employment and training programs. The intensive case management provided project youth seemed the least likely to be maintained after grant funding ended.

Category II: Education and Training for Youth Offender Initiatives

Projects in this category were designed to provide comprehensive school-to-work (STW) education and training within juvenile correctional facilities. The projects also were designed to provide aftercare services and job placements for youth leaving the facilities and returning to their communities.

Research and Evaluation Associates evaluated only the Ohio project. The two other Category II projects, Avon Park, Florida, and Indianapolis, Indiana, were evaluated by another firm under a separate DOJ agreement.

The Ohio project comprised two youth offender correctional facilities that differed significantly. Mohican Juvenile Correctional Facility (MJCF) is for older youth who have both criminal and substance abuse problems; the Youth Development Center (YDC) is for younger youth who have committed less-serious offenses.

The Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) proposed its project to develop strong STW programs in the two correctional facilities and to support transition of youth back to their communities with model aftercare service programs. The project's ultimate goal was to reduce recidivism.

Findings for the Category II Project

Planning the Project

A significant aspect of project planning was the focus on developing the capacity for Information Technology (IT) training in the two correctional facilities. The training was to prepare youth for the kind of employment opportunities that were growing in the Cuyahoga County area. Such a sharply focused approach to occupational training did not match skills and interests of many youth. The IT training for many youth, however, provided an introduction to computers and served to improve their computer literacy.

Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships

After its proposal was funded, DYS prepared memoranda of understanding with the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs (CCDJA) to implement the project and to establish the IT program at YDC and at the Mohican facility. The Cuyahoga County Division of Treatment Services (DTS), a part of CCDJA, was to provide aftercare, IT training, and follow-up services to youth returning to the county after incarceration from YDC. Youth returning from the Mohican facility were under the supervision of the regional DYS parole officer. These youth received work readiness, IT training, and placement services from CCDJA contractors.

Staffs of CCDJA and DYS met monthly to exchange information and approaches to youth development. The partnership led to sharing resources in substance abuse treatment. Staffs also agreed to use a common risk-management instrument. And, they jointly developed an aftercare relapse prevention support group for youth from both Mohican and YDC. CCDJA also began developing an integrated case management planning process modeled on the DYS integrated case management approach.

Organizational Issues

The school at YDC, the Harry Eastman School, operated under the Cleveland Public Schools and used its mandated curriculum and standards. The YODP funded Eastman's STW Information Technology (IT) program. The school at Mohican was a registered charter school under the auspices of DYS, but it was not accredited by the state. The IT program at the facility was designed to operate in three classes a day, each one and one-half hours long.

The major innovation proposed by the Ohio project was implementation of a STW approach to learning, rather than the addition of the IT classes. While teachers and administrators reported they were pleased with the computers and the addition of a technology instructor, these new classes served as augmentations of traditional school approaches more than a reorganization of the curriculum to accommodate a STW design. The institutions were not accountable to CCDJA, which remained virtually powerless to insist that the correctional facilities rethink their curriculum.

The dismantling of the STW system in Cleveland and the lack of STW in East Cleveland essentially defeated implementation of the core component of the Category II model — a STW curriculum that would be supported when the youth returned to their home school districts.

Aftercare

The Division of Treatment Services of CCDJA provided eight assessment specialists (case managers), two job developers, two family therapists, and one anger management-probation specialist for youth returning from YDC. The agency had one additional staff person serving as a transition specialist at the YDC facility. None of these was supported directly with demonstration grant funds.

The assessment specialists met assigned youth one or two times a week at school. In addition, the specialists took turns visiting the Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries (LMM) and Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) program sites on days activities were scheduled. Youth were observed, therefore, by a case manager three or four days a week; and assessment specialists knew the youth in the program. Youth received work readiness training in their first month and then staff hoped the youth would find a job and start work. LMM offered job placement services for older youth and two job developers at CCDJA offered job placement services for younger youth. (The job developers at CCDJA were also the IT instructors.)

Youth leaving the Mohican facility were returned to the care of the youth development specialist and job developer at the regional DYS office. Sixty days before a youth's release, the case manager in Cleveland and the Mohican staff developed a unified case plan. Work readiness, job placement, and follow-up services were provided youth by the CCDJA program of services through community-based organizations.

Organizational innovations were primarily in the aftercare services offered by Cuyahoga County. This made the Ohio project function more like a Category I project than a Category II project.

Collateral Services

Youth received work clothing as needed as well as bus tokens for trips to program events. Youth received substance abuse interventions, but there did not appear to be relationships with providers

of other services, such as mental health, tattoo removal, etc, which the youth might need. Through a grant procured by the head of the Division of Treatment Services, youth were beginning to receive personal counseling.

Staff Recruitment

The project manager's background was in criminal justice. The two correctional facilities each hired an IT instructor. Each teacher had worked at her respective school before the YODP grant was awarded. These were the only staff hired through the demonstration grant. CCDJA hired additional assessment specialists, job developers/IT instructors, and personal counselors with grant funds it obtained after the demonstration grant award.

Target Population Recruitment

Youth were recruited into the project by virtue of their assignment to a residential facility. There were concerns about the pattern of service delivery occasioned by incarceration and release practices. Youth arrived on a rolling basis at the correctional facilities and were released into the community on a rolling basis — depending on behavior, grades, and other factors. As a result, teachers did not know how long a youth would remain in their classes. Similarly, aftercare classes and services also received youth on a rolling basis and staff did not know how long they would have them in their care. The effect, despite efforts to design a curriculum either at the residential facility or in the community, was that there was no provision for youth to complete training once their probation ended.

Technical Assistance

The Ohio project staff attended the September 1999 and the February 2000 technical assistance conferences sponsored by DOL. Two conference calls with all Category II site leaders were held in 2000. Another was held in early 2001. These calls allowed DOL, OJJDP, and site leaders to share what their experiences and to address challenges in a collegial setting.

Project leaders also received semi-weekly telephone or e-mail inquiries from the technical assistance team. Based on issues that surfaced during these telephone conferences, a special Category II workshop was scheduled for March 2001 in Lakeland, Florida. The workshop also included a visit to the Avon Park Youth Academy, another Category II project site, and to the offices of STREETSmart, the organization responsible for the aftercare component.

Three technical assistance site visits were made to the Ohio project, and a three-day training session was held in May 2001. Evaluations of workshops were positive.

Sustainability

Elements of the Ohio project will continue after project funding ends. The two residential facilities will continue to operate and IT classes will continue to be taught because of the funding provided to initiate them. The aftercare portion of the program was being amplified and sustained through a combination of WIA and foundation grant funds.

Category III: Community-wide Coordination Projects

Category III grants were awarded to focus on high poverty and high crime areas in medium-sized cities. The design was for grantees to work with youth service providers to develop linkages that strengthened the coordination of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders. Grantees were tasked to consider ways to:

- build upon existing employment and training, recreation, conflict resolution, and other youth crime and gang prevention programs;
- establish alternative sentencing and community service options for youth offenders, especially those who have been gang members; and
- establish or continue gang suppression activities.

Findings for Category III Projects

Planning the Project

Planning for the projects was adequate in that grantees designed their projects to accomplish the goals specified by DOL. All projects included both public and private agencies and organizations as collaborating or supporting partners, although the level of involvement of the partners varied among the projects.

Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships

With only minor exceptions, the six projects followed the original project designs they outlined in their grant applications. All attempted to establish linkages in support of goals and to build upon existing systems, which included both core and collateral services provided youth. Some existing systems, however, were more developed than others and, as a result, were able to progress more quickly toward meeting their objectives and goals. Several projects, especially those that were not well established, had difficulties recruiting both partners and clients.

Organizational Issues

The six projects generally had strong, clear, and consistent leadership from a central organization, even though some projects had difficulty building momentum and then sustaining it. It appeared, however, that success depended less upon the nature of leadership than the particularities of place and circumstance. One critical factor, for example, was whether the organization running the project was well established in the community.

Project facilities generally were adequate and situated near their target areas. The Pensacola facility, however, was an exception. Its location appeared to have caused some difficulties recruiting clients. The project, however, took steps to solve this problem by establishing a partnership with a charter school in a neighborhood targeted by the project.

Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities

Successful models for building competencies to prepare youthful offenders and those at risk of court involvement for life, worthwhile work, and transition into careers are those that have the proper mixture of several key elements. These elements include community-wide collaboration; employment and training programs; alternative sentencing and community service programs; and anti-gang initiatives. Evaluators found that the six projects made important strides toward creating significant and effective amalgams of these components. Evaluators found, however, that those projects that emphasized job placement, or delivery of services, at the expense of the more important task of building and enhancing partnerships generally were less successful than those that attempted to balance these efforts.

Evaluators found that all projects faced barriers as they attempted to provide employment and training programs to clients. Many youth needed remedial writing and mathematics training to make them more employable. This was compounded by the fact that many project clients rejected formal schooling and, apparently, sometimes were not interested in finding work.

The six projects served as alternative sentencing or community service programs in varying degrees. Also, the projects generally had difficulties establishing gang suppression activities in support of the projects. Two important reasons for this was the reluctance of youth to identify themselves as gang members and strong anti-gang efforts in some cities that drove gang activity underground.

Collateral Services

In the case of Category III projects, collateral services were those services for clients other than soft-skills, pre-employment, basic, vocational, and educational training. These services included tattoo removal, help in finding adequate work clothes, and counseling for personal and family problems. In general, the six projects were not prepared to provide collateral services and chose instead to refer clients who needed them to other more-specialized agencies.

Staff Recruitment

In general, staff members of all six projects were knowledgeable, energetic, and enthusiastic about their work. Grantees used YODP funds to add staff, usually one or two positions, to existing organizational structures.

Recruitment processes often were affected by local labor market conditions. In some instances, the low unemployment rate made it difficult to hire highly qualified personnel for the projects.

Evaluators found that older, experienced staff members working with well-established organizations that dealt with youth appeared to have less turnover and to be more effective in dealing with clients. Project coordinators at all six projects were seasoned and experienced. Staff turnover appeared to be a distraction for several projects.

Target Population Recruitment

Each project targeted clients differently and received them from a variety of sources. The juvenile justice system served as a primary provider of clients in Bakersfield, Clifton, Minneapolis, and Pensacola. Both Knoxville and Rockford focused on recruiting youth who were at risk of court involvement.

Three of the projects dealt primarily with younger youth. These were Bakersfield, Pensacola, and Minneapolis. This focus often meant that the projects had to compete with other youth-oriented programs for clients. Probation officers, who had power over clients, often weighed the advantages of assigning youth to the YODP instead of to other programs that provided similar services.

Technical Assistance

Research and Evaluation Associates initially was authorized to conduct an initial visit to Category III projects. Subsequently authorization was given for an additional technical assistance site visit to each project. The projects also received technical assistance during two conferences that were held in Washington, DC, and Tampa, Florida. The technical assistance team also held scheduled semi-weekly telephone conversations with projects. Additional help was provided via telephone and e-mail when projects requested it. In addition, the technical assistance team collaborated with the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) to arrange for specialized technical assistance that was delivered by NYEC consultants. Consultants facilitated on-site sessions for Bakersfield, Clifton, Knoxville, and Rockford.

Sustainability

The possibility that projects would be unable to obtain funds to continue their operations after YODP grant funding ended created anxiety among several staffs. By June 2001, DOL had announced that it would provide additional funds to four of the six Category III projects so that they could continue for another year. Sites selected were Bakersfield, Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford. In addition, those sites that were not refunded were offered no-cost extensions. Although it was not funded for a second grant, Pensacola requested and received a one-year no-cost extension to continue operations through the summer of 2002. In the end, sustaining the project after grant funding ended posed a significant problem only for Clifton, which had used all of its funds and did not request a no-cost extension. By summer 2001, the project had not found additional funding sources.

Lessons Learned

The demonstration projects were still evolving when the final report was written. Only when the projects have ended and their long-term outcomes have been examined will it be possible to state more explicitly and confidently what lessons actually were learned from the demonstration project.

The process evaluation, nonetheless, identified several factors that *appear* to have contributed to the success of the projects. The factors identified were based upon an organizational model of public management developed by Research and Evaluation Associates and the DOL staff during the demonstration project. In general, the evaluation found that well-managed and organized projects are those that:

- have well-conceived plans;
- establish partnerships with the juvenile justice system;
- collect and maintain data;
- develop community support/network;
- have active grantee involvement;
- connect the workforce development and juvenile justice systems;
- leverage resources through collaboration and partnerships;
- have in place a continuous improvement system; and
- share leadership and information with stakeholders.

In addition, the evaluation found that contextual factors outside a project's control or sphere of influence tended to either hamper or help a project's staff as it attempted to implement the project. These factors included the presence or absence of supportive communities and the strength of local economies.

In summary, the evaluation concluded that the YODP served as a learning experience for all those who were involved in it — stakeholders, sponsors, evaluators, technical assistance providers, and others who supported the effort.

For the Departments of Labor and Justice, the demonstration project provided valuable experience working as collaborative partners. The sharing of information and responsibilities helped the departments identify gaps in theories and approaches that are used to address problems facing youthful offenders and those who are at risk of court involvement. This will be especially valuable for future demonstration projects in which the Departments of Labor, Justice, and Health and Human Services collaborate.

For the 12 grantees that participated in the process evaluation, an important lesson was that technical assistance is critical in helping them succeed. It appeared that over the course of the demonstration the projects, which initially were reluctant to ask for help, became more comfortable working with the technical assistance team. The projects learned how the team could assist them in identifying problem areas and strengthening their efforts to reach their objectives and goals. The lessons learned about the role and capabilities of technical assistance will be especially valuable for projects selected for future demonstrations.

Finally, for the evaluation and technical assistance teams, the demonstration project provided valuable insights and information as well as new tools to use during future demonstrations. More specifically, teams will be able to further refine the public management model they used to identify characteristics of well-managed and operated demonstration projects. This should aid the teams in their efforts to evaluate and provide technical assistance to projects that focus on youthful offenders and youth who are at risk of court involvement.

Closing

This evaluation report provides an assessment of the implementation process undertaken by each project and, to the extent possible, it reflects how effective the projects were in building upon existing programs and systems to serve targeted youth. Although the demonstration project continues with an additional group of projects through December 2003 — and perhaps beyond — the report's major findings for the initial group of YODP grantees have indicated:

- Partnerships between youth offender agencies and workforce development agencies provide an important connection that can further each agency's mission;

- The partnerships are likely to continue and the YODP was the instrument for this breakthrough;
- Youth indicated that the promise of jobs at a decent wage is what drew them to the local projects and it is what kept them engaged with the projects;
- Use of a crime prevention model that includes employment, training, and placement services appears critical for these youth;
- The project's promise and ability to help youth transition to employment was a major feature that led many probation officers to refer youth to local projects; and
- It may take additional time to demonstrate that an investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders, or youth at risk of criminal involvement, successfully transitioning to full-time employment.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
LIST OF TABLES	xxi
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Theoretical Basis for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project	3
Methodology	5
Limitations of the Evaluation	8
Organization of Report	9
II. CATEGORY I - MODEL COMMUNITY PROJECTS	11
Section Organization	12
Findings	12
Planning for the Project	12
Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships	14
Organizational Issues	19
Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities	23
Collateral Services	27
Staff Recruitment	28
Target Population Recruitment	30
Technical Assistance	31
Sustainability	32
Summary	34
III. CATEGORY II - EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH OFFENDERS INITIATIVE	37
Section Organization	37
Findings	38
Planning for the Project	38
Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships	41
Organizational Issues	43
Training and Employment Activities	47

Table of Contents

Section		Page
	Collateral Services	51
	Staff Recruitment	51
	Target Population Recruitment	52
	Technical Assistance	53
	Sustainability	54
IV.	FINDINGS, CATEGORY III - COMMUNITY-WIDE COORDINATION PROJECTS	55
	Section Organization	56
	Findings	57
	Planning for the Project	57
	Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships	57
	Organizational Issues	61
	Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities	63
	Collateral Services	67
	Staff Recruitment	67
	Target Population Recruitment	69
	Technical Assistance	70
	Sustainability	70
	Summary	74
V.	LESSONS LEARNED	75
	Public Management Model	75
	1. Well-conceived Plan	77
	2. Established Links with the Juvenile Justice System	79
	3. Collection and Maintenance of Data	81
	4. Developed Community Support/Network	82
	5. Grantee Involvement	83
	6. Connection to Workforce Development and Juvenile Justice Systems	85
	7. Leveraging Resources Through Collaboration and Partnerships	88
	8. Continuous Improvement	90
	9. Shared Leadership and Information sharing	92
	Contextual Aspects of the Projects	93
	Summary	95
	Closing	97

Table of Contents

Section	Page
REFERENCES	99
APPENDIX A - Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)	A-1
APPENDIX B - Scope of Work	B-1
APPENDIX C - Field Research Guide	C-1
APPENDIX D- Category I Final Report Summaries	D-1
APPENDIX E - Category III Final Report Summaries	E-1

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites	7
2. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category II Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites	7
3. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category III Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites	7
4. Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites and Local Names	11
5. Funded Partners in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites	15
6. Collaborators in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Projects	16
7. Work Readiness Services and Providers in the Youth Offender Category I Sites	17
8. Work Development and Placement Process for Youth Offender Category I Sites	18
9. Reported Status of Clients on June 30, 2001, Category I Projects	25
10. Sources of Youth Clients in the Model Communities Youth Offender Demonstration Project	30
11. Technical Assistance Provided to Category I Model Communities Projects	31
12. Status of Clients, Ohio Category II Project, June 30, 2001	49
13. Planning for YODP Grants, Category III Projects	58
14. Service Providers in Category III Projects	62
15. Status of Clients, Category III Projects	68
16. Demographics of YODP Participants, Category III Projects	71
17. On-Site Technical Assistance Provided to Category III Projects	72
18. Public Management Model	76

Section I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Congress set aside $13.1 million in the Department of Labor's Pilot and Demonstration budget in the 1998 Program Year for programs to address the needs of youth who were, had been, or were at risk of coming under court supervision. The Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) collaborated with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the Department of Justice (DOJ) in announcing SGA/DAA 98-015. (See Appendix A.)

The solicitation for grant proposals focused on projects designed to get youth at risk of criminal involvement, youth offenders, and gang members between the ages of 14 and 24 into long-term employment at wage levels that would prevent future dependency and would break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency.

In June 1999 DOL made awards to 14 Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) grantees in three categories:

- **Category I - Model Community Projects** were set in high-poverty neighborhoods where comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth had been established:

  (1) Denver, Colorado;

  (2) Houston, Texas;

  (3) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;

  (4) Richmond, California; and

  (5) Seattle, Washington.

- **Category II - Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiatives** were awarded to states to provide comprehensive school-to-work (STW) education and training within juvenile correctional facilities as well as aftercare services and job placement when youth left correctional facilities and returned to their home communities:

  (1) Columbus, Ohio;

(2) Indianapolis, Indiana; and

(3) Tallahassee, Florida.

- **Category III - Community-wide Coordination Projects** worked with local youth service providers to develop linkages that strengthened the coordination of prevention and aftercare services for youth offenders in small to medium-sized cities with high rates of poverty and crime:

(1) Bakersfield, California;

(2) Clifton, New Jersey;

(3) Knoxville, Tennessee;

(4) Minneapolis, Minnesota;

(5) Pensacola, Florida; and

(6) Rockford, Illinois.

The projects were to operate for 24 months from the time of contract negotiation, generally from summer 1999, until summer 2001. The first six months were for planning, and the remaining 18 months were for implementation. In April 1999, DOL awarded a contract to Research and Evaluation Associates to provide technical assistance (TA) to the fourteen YODP projects. The TA experts assisted the projects through conferences, conference calls, and project- or category-specific technical assistance.

In June 1999, DOL awarded a task order to Research and Evaluation Associates to conduct a process evaluation of 12 of the 14 demonstration projects. In November 1999, OJJDP entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Center for Crime and Delinquency to evaluate the remaining two Category II projects in Avon Park, Florida, and Indianapolis, Indiana.

The goal of the evaluation conducted by Research and Evaluation Associates was to document the process of implementation of the projects, noting achievements and challenges as project staff attempted to deliver integrated services to the target population. To the extent possible, the evaluation also was to report the outcomes of the projects' efforts to transition youth offenders and youth at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile and criminal justice systems to full-time employment at livable wages in positions with career potential.

Theoretical Basis for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project

The social development strategy assumed by the design of the YODP was based on understanding the concepts of risk and protective factors. James Howell (1995) noted that risk factors existed in multiple domains (community, family, school, individual/peer) and that common risk factors, such as availability of drugs, lack of commitment to school, family management problems, and early academic failure, were useful in predicting diverse behavior problems. Research revealed that the more risk factors present, the greater the risk of juvenile problem behavior. Further, risk factors were shown to have consistent effects regardless of race and culture.

Protective factors helped buffer exposure to risks. Protective factors identified included "healthy beliefs and clear standards for productive, law-abiding behavior, and bonding with adults who adhered to these beliefs and standards" (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). Researchers (Benson, Galbraith, Espeland, 1995) analyzed the survey results of more than 270,000 young people in 600 communities across the United States and found that the difference between troubled teens and those leading healthy, productive, and positive lives was strongly affected by the presence of "developmental assets." The more developmental assets the young people had (such as family support, self-esteem, and hope), the less likely they were to use alcohol and other drugs, and exhibit other problem behaviors.

Delinquency prevention and intervention strategies in reducing juvenile crime showed positive benefits when they were based on theory-driven prevention practices. When they had knowledge about the risk factors that confronted youth, communities could develop and implement effective prevention and intervention programs to strengthen community institutions and buffer children from the effects of the identified risk factors (Howell, Krisberg, Jones, 1995; Mendel, 2000).

Promising approaches in delinquency prevention, intervention, and treatment resulted in development of key principles and a comprehensive strategy for preventing and reducing adolescent problem behavior. These included:

- strengthening families in their role of providing guidance and discipline, and instilling sound values as their children's first and primary teachers;
- supporting core social institutions, including schools, churches, and other community-organizations, to alleviate risk factors and help children develop to their maximum potential; and
- promoting prevention strategies that reduced the impact of risk factors and enhanced the influence of protective factors in the lives of youth at great risk of delinquency.

The emerging professional consensus was that communities needed comprehensive strategies or models to combat youth crime, reduce recidivism and gang involvement, and help youth secure employment at livable wage levels. The YODP provided communities with a theory-driven, research-based prevention framework. It also provided for local control of program planning and implementation. Project grantees also were assured that they would receive the tools, training, and technical assistance needed to bring community members together to build on that framework. This assistance and grant funding would enable communities to design and implement comprehensive programming for the targeted population.

The following issue areas were important components of the demonstration model and provided the framework for planning and developing programming for youth.

- **Community-wide Collaboration.** The YODP was to change ways of thinking about youth program planning. Representatives from a variety of community sectors, including workforce development boards, courts, schools, police, healthcare, human services, and community organizations had worked together and learned first-hand how prevention and intervention efforts could be implemented successfully. The approach for the YODP was to develop the coordination that would drive a better application of resources and reduce unnecessary duplication of effort that often occurs within human services.

- **Employment and Training.** Schools and communities were to view the school dropout problem from both prevention and intervention perspectives. From the prevention perspective, projects recognized that youth without a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED) were hard-pressed to find employment that led to higher wages. Helping youth remain in school or encouraging their return through alternative schools or GED-preparation activities became an important delinquency prevention and employment preparation objective. Providing school-to-work (STW) opportunities to incarcerated youth was an important intervention objective. Within the community, moreover, connecting target youth to work readiness, subsidized employment, job placement assistance, and other Workforce Investment Act (WIA) opportunities would constitute the major innovation of the YODP.

- **Alternative Sentencing and Community Service.** A justice system based on the balanced approach differed from traditional systems in that competency development, accountability, and community protection objectives provided clear outcomes directed at the offender, the victim, and the community. All three components were to receive balanced attention and gain tangible benefits from their interaction with the justice system. Bazemore and Umbreit's Balanced and Restorative Justice model (1994) stressed that offenders should leave the justice system capable of being productive and responsible citizens; that victims and communities should have their losses restored, and should be empowered as active participants in the juvenile justice process; and that the justice system must protect society

by providing a range of intervention alternatives (mostly community-based) geared to the varying risks presented by offenders.

- **Gang Initiatives.** The underlying assumption of the Spergel model (1990) was that gang problems were largely a response to community social disorganization, where key social institutions such as schools, family, police, and businesses were unable to address the problem collaboratively. The key idea of the model was to have organizations and representatives of local communities join forces to engage and control the behavior of young gang members, and encourage them to participate in legitimate societal activities.

- **Aftercare for Youth Returning from Detention.** Altschuler (1998) and other researchers theorized that if juvenile offenders received intensive intervention while they were incarcerated, during their transition back to the community, and when they were under community supervision, they would benefit in areas such as family and peer relations, education, employment, substance abuse, mental health, and recidivism. The Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model stressed collaboration among the juvenile justice system, probation and parole, and community-based service providers to address specific needs of youth offenders.

Methodology

DOL included certain evaluation questions about the demonstration projects in its Scope of Work for the process evaluation. (See Appendix B for the Scope of Work.) Some questions applied to the entire set of demonstration projects while others were specific to one category of projects. (See Appendix C for the full set of evaluation questions.) The evaluation team organized the questions according to a systems-flow model based on the work of Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) that included these elements: **C**ontext, **I**nputs, **P**rocess, and **P**roducts (CIPP). Questions were organized into 10 categories with general and category-specific sub-questions. The 10 major evaluation questions specified by DOL were:

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

The ordered set of questions was formulated into a Field Guide for structuring evaluation visits to the projects. Because the number and roles of partners differed, depending on the site, the Field Guide shaped the direction of interviews, regardless of how a given project partnership was organized.

Evaluators made three visits to each of the 12 projects, using the consistent approach developed through the Field Guide. The first site visits tested the Field Guide and evaluators gathered baseline data. The second round of evaluation visits occurred during fall 2000 when the demonstrations would have had about 10 months of operating experience. Evaluators made the concluding third set of evaluation visits in spring 2001 close to the time the grant funding was scheduled to end. (See Tables 1-3 for the evaluation visit schedules.)

Table 1. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category I Demonstration Projects

Denver, CO	Houston, TX	Philadelphia, PA	Richmond, CA	Seattle, WA
December 1-2, 1999	February 15-16, 2000	February 24-25, 2000	March 16-17, 2000	February 14-15, 2000
October 3-4, 2000	September 26-27, 2000	October 10-11, 2000	October 5-6, 2000	October 17-18, 2000
May 24-25, 2001	June 13-14, 2001	May 31-June1, 2001	May 17-18, 2001	May 22-23, 2001

Table 2. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category II Demonstration Project

Columbus, OH
May 8-9, 2000
October 16-18, 2000
May 14-16, 2001

Table 3. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category III Youth Offender Demonstration Projects

Bakersfield, CA	Clifton, NJ	Knoxville, TN	Minneapolis, MN	Pensacola, FL	Rockford, IL
January 13-14, 2000	January 10-11, 2000	November 22-23, 1999	January 18-19, 2000	January 18-19, 2000	January 5-6, 2000
October 5-6, 2000	September 26-27, 2000	October 2-3, 2000	October 10-11, 2000	September 25-26, 2000	September 19-20, 2000
June 11-12, 2001	May 8-9, 2001	April 10-11, 2001	May 14-15, 2001	May 24-25, 2001	June 21-22, 2001

During evaluation visits, evaluators interviewed key staff of project partners who provided academic, vocational or work readiness educational training, personal support, community service opportunities, gang suppression services, or court supervision. Evaluators attended, when possible, project advisory board meetings. They also observed training sessions and talked to project clients. In addition, evaluators collected information about each project, conducted records reviews to determine the kinds and duration of services clients received, and met with management information

system (MIS) staff to obtain project data. Evaluators prepared site visit reports organized according to the 10 evaluation questions.

Evaluators prepared an Interim Report after the second set of evaluation visits. This Final Report is based on the cumulative experience of the demonstrations by the time of the third visits. For both the Interim and Final Reports, evaluators compared the original proposals, evaluation visit reports, and the DOL design for the category of the project. (The reports of each Category I project are included in Appendix D. The reports of each Category III project are included in Appendix E. The report for the one Category II site is embedded in the narrative of this report.)

Limitations of the Evaluation

There were several important limitations of the evaluation. These involved the nature of a process evaluation, which in this case was to track the implementation and progress of the projects over a 24-month period, as well as those that are inherent in the conduct of demonstration projects.

Because evaluators spent only a total of six days on site with each project, they were limited in what information they could collect through observations. Client training, for example, often was not being conducted on days when evaluators visited sites. As a result, evaluators could not always assess the quality of training clients received. Without additional participant observation, moreover, evaluators were unable to judge whether the projects met the needs of clients, including whether they helped them adequately prepare for and find jobs.

Also, because of on-site time limitations, evaluators were unable to judge for themselves either the quality or the effectiveness of the components of the projects that were being implemented. This meant, for example, that they had difficulty determining whether project components were built on best practice models for work readiness and vocational training curricula. Project colleagues and partners, nonetheless, reported that they believed the components were helpful and effective.

The lack of a uniform reporting system, including specified data collection requirements for the projects, especially made it difficult for evaluators to determine the quantity of services received and client participation in them. As a result, evaluators also could not adequately determine outcomes produced by the projects, such as whether the projects had helped reduce crime rates in their communities. Except for conclusions based on anecdotal reports, evaluators could not fully determine the value of the partnerships that were created or expanded during the course of the projects.

Despite these limitations, however, evaluators using the qualitative methods inherent in a process evaluation were able to determine with a large degree of certainty whether the components of the projects were being implemented adequately as specified in implementation plans and whether the projects were progressing satisfactorily toward meeting their written goals and objectives.

Organization of Report

Four major sections follow this introduction to the Final Report. Section II of the report analyzes the efforts of Category I demonstration projects; Section III the efforts of the one Category II project in Ohio; and Section IV the efforts of Category III projects.

Section V, Lessons Learned, reflects efforts by the evaluation and technical assistance teams and the DOL staff to identify characteristics that were universal to projects that successfully implemented an integrated services model. The nine characteristics that were identified became the basis for a still-evolving public management model that appears to provide an effective approach to administering programs targeting youth offenders and those at risk of court involvement.

While the model advances a public management approach, it does not prescribe one specific service strategy. It is our hypothesis, nonetheless, that organizations which structure their work around the model will be better able to formulate and implement an effective service delivery strategy that responds to their community's unique needs. In doing this, projects also will be able to help youth transition into full-time employment at livable wages and into jobs with career potential. Finally, Section V concludes with a summary and closing that identifies several key findings that resulted from the YODP.

Section II

CATEGORY I - MODEL COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The solicitation for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) grants described the Category I, Model Community Projects, as grants for "comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth which have already been established." Grant awards were given to the projects to:

(1) set up a combination of gang prevention and suppression projects;

(2) set up alternative sentencing and community service projects for youth offenders;

(3) support existing case management and job placement services for youth on probation or returning to the community from correction facilities; and

(4) serve as models for other high-poverty, high-crime communities in the country.

The Category I model committed the communities to demonstrating the effectiveness of a comprehensive, integrated approach to preventing youth involvement with the justice system and to intervening with youth who had been court-involved to prevent their relapse and to provide for them a secure and constructive future. (See Appendix D for reports on individual Model Communities Projects.)

Table 4 lists the names that the five Model Community YODP teams dubbed their projects. Denver did not give a distinct name to its program, but Denver's case managers were called youth coaches, and the program was explained to clients in youth development terms. Philadelphia changed the name of its project midway through the demonstration period from "Learn and Earn" to "Youth Connect."

Table 4. Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites and Local Names

Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Youth Offender Demonstration Project	U-Turn	Learn and Earn; then Youth Connect	Youth Economic Employment Service (YEES)	New Start

It is important to note that all five Category I projects received some form of continuation. Three projects — Denver, Richmond, and Seattle — received funding from the U.S. Department of Labor

(DOL) on July 1, 2001, for an additional year of operation. The other two sites — Houston and Philadelphia — received no-cost time extensions for an additional year. The analysis that follows recognizes that all five Category I projects were on-going rather than finished demonstrations.

Section Organization

The remainder of this section discusses and compares the Model Communities Projects under the following headings:

- Planning the Project,
- Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships,
- Organizational Issues,
- Training, Employment and Gang Suppression Activities,
- Collateral Services,
- Staff Recruitment,
- Target Population Recruitment,
- Technical Assistance, and
- Sustainability.

FINDINGS

Planning the Project

Each Category I grantee had a project plan, yet not all plans included all dimensions of the integrated services model. These included: employment and training for youth offenders and youth at risk of court supervision, gang prevention and suppression, alternative sentencing and community service, and aftercare for youth returning from incarceration. Philadelphia's plan, for example, was directed primarily at reducing the rate of high school dropouts and Houston's lacked the community service aspect. In addition, both Houston's and Denver's plans lacked a gang intervention element. Projects, however, incorporated missing elements as the projects evolved.

The amount of community involvement in planning differed among projects. In both Denver and Houston, the lead agency facilitated development of the proposal with the intended partners rather than writing the proposal themselves, as was their usual practice. A staff member of the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) wrote the Philadelphia proposal, and arranged for it to be submitted by the then-Private Industry Council. In Seattle, the planner at the local workforce development agency prepared the proposal with input and review from partners. In Richmond two veteran partners, Youth Services Bureau (YSB) and Opportunity West (OW) wrote the proposal and negotiated with the City of Richmond to be grant recipient. Youth and parents were not part of these generally inter-organizational planning groups.

For several projects, YODP funding fit their community's plan for youth employment. And, to some extent, all the cities saw the funding as a way to strengthen and supplement existing programs.

Before YODP grants were awarded, Denver had a Kulick grant that was bringing employment and training services to some neighborhoods along the Platte River where poverty and crime rates were high and high school graduation rates were low. YODP allowed Denver to include youth employment services in more area neighborhoods. Houston also had Kulick grant funds for several troubled neighborhoods that abutted the prosperous downtown, and YODP added funding for several more of these neighborhoods.

The School District of Philadelphia wanted to offer alternative forms of schooling in all 22 of its comprehensive high schools for youth who were struggling in school or who had already dropped out. The demonstration grant allowed four target high schools to offer Transitional Opportunities Promoting Success (TOPS) for youth at risk of dropping out and the Twilight program for older youth, many of whom already had dropped out.

Richmond had received a Safe Futures grant to target gang activity, but most needy African American youth in the city lived in neighborhoods not included in its services. Seattle had a Safe Futures grant that was operating successfully in West Seattle, but its coverage did not extend to the White Center region and the area around the Towns of Burien and Tukwila. For both Richmond and Seattle, the YODP grants allowed them to offer services to youth who were not served by their Safe Futures programs.

The plans evolved considerably during the first two years of the YODP implementation process, as various aspects proved unworkable or as situations changed. Denver, Richmond, and Seattle gradually added increased educational opportunities as project staff realized that YODP youth were seriously hampered in their job search by their lack of educational achievement and/or credentials. All three projects initially offered tutoring, but began to provide GED preparation and alternative school enrollment opportunities.

The Philadelphia Workforce Development Council (PWDC) moved responsibility for employment training and job placement from the schools to an organization with youth employment experience at the end of the first year. The PWDC then absorbed responsibility itself when the new organization failed to implement the plan. In Houston, part of the plan had been to provide school-to-work opportunities at Gulf Coast Trades (GCT), a correctional facility; but the Harris County Court reduced the number of youth being sent to non-state-run residential facilities. Lacking enrollment of target neighborhood youth, GCT was redesigning the STW component during summer 2001 to develop it in the facilities operated by the Texas Youth Commission.

The advisory committees were constituted chiefly of the partnerships representatives. In some cases, they also included representatives of non-funded collaborators. Cities were expected to involve youth and parents in the projects, but neither planning groups nor advisory councils had done that by summer 2001. Denver and Seattle had included families in their activities, however; and other communities were forming Youth Councils as part of the transition to the structures required by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). These councils required the inclusion of youth and families. Houston organized a collaboration of all youth employment service providers, the Partnership for At-Risk Youth Strategies (PAYS). The advisory committee of all the PAYS agency representatives planned to include youth and parents.

Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships

Model Communities projects were designed to build onto and expand existing partnerships for serving target youth. The projects were to have four main components: employment and training services, alternative sentencing and community service opportunities, intensive aftercare for youth returning from correctional facilities, and gang prevention and suppression activities.

At least some partners in each city had collaborated before the YODP grants. Over the duration of the projects, those partnerships changed and/or expanded. A profile of funded project partners is reported in Table 5 (page 15); the list of non-funded partners is reported in Table 6 (page 16).

Delivery of work readiness services is described in Table 7 (page 17), and indicates the extent of collaboration among partners. All projects had a formal intake and assessment process, and all provided intensive case management services to youth who were enrolled. All projects emphasized the need to get a high school certificate, either a diploma or a GED. If youth were able to return to school, that became their main task as project participants. If they needed to work, preparation for a diploma or GED was organized around their work schedules.

Table 5. Funded Partners in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites

Partners' Role	Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Grant Management Organization	Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD)	Houston Works USA (HW)	Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC)	Richmond Office of Employment and Training (Richmond Works)	Seattle-King County Workforce Development Corporation (WDC)
Project Management	Denver Area Youth Services (DAYS)	HW	PWDC	Richmond Works	KC Work Training Program (WTP)
Case Management	DAYS	Educational Training Corporation (ETC), Gulf Coast Trades (GCT)	Family Court (FC), PWDC	YSB, YouthWorks, Neighborhood House (NH)	Safe Futures (SF), King County Superior Court (KCSC)
Service Delivery Organizations	DAYS, Denver Works (DW), Community College of Denver (CCD)	ETC, GCT	School District of Philadelphia, Aspira, Philadelphia Anti-violence Anti-gang Network (PAAN)	YouthWorks, YSB, Opportunity West (OW), YouthBuild	Safe Futures, Pacific Associates, KCSC, Metro YMCA, Southwest Family Services

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Table 6. Collaborators in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Projects

Collaborators	Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Fee for Service		Community College of Houston, Texas Engineering Extension (TEEX), PAYS Network (Special Needs Referrals)		Sierra Adult School, Contra Costa Community College	Opportunity Skyways, South Seattle Community College, YouthBuild
Supporting (Unfunded) Collaborators	Denver Juvenile Court, Denver County Probation Dept., Denver Gang Coalition, Denver School District, Youth Opportunities, Families	Harris County Courts, Police, and Probation Departments, Texas Youth Commisssion, Houston Independent School District, Youth Opportunities, Mayor's Anti-gang Office (MAGO) One-Stop centers	Family Court, Probation Department, School District of Philadelphia	CC County Courts, West Contra Costa School District, Safe Futures	Department of Juvenile Justice, White Center, Chamber of Commerce, Highline School District, Families

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Table 7. Work Readiness Services in Youth Offender Category I Sites

Service	Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Intake and Assessment	DAYS	ETC or GCT	PWDC	YSB, YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Case Management	DAYS	ETC or GCT	Superior Court, PWDC	YSB, NH, YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Diploma or GED Help	DAYS Community College of Denver	ETC or GCT	TOPS, Twilight Adult School	YSB, LEAP, YouthBuild, Sierra Adult School	Southwest Family Services, Highline School District
Soft and Life Skills Training	DW	ETC or GCT	PWDC, Aspira	YouthWorks	Metro YMCA, Pacific Associates
Barrier Removal	DAYS	Referrals	Superior Court, PWDC	YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Vocational Education	Community College of Denver, OJT	HW, Community College of Houston, Texas Engineering Extension	OJT	YouthBuild, OJT	South Seattle Community College, Opportunity Skyways, YouthBuild
Substance Abuse/ Personal Counseling	DAYS	Referrals	Referrals	Referrals	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates

Table 8 (page 18) reports the partners responsible for job search, placement and follow-up for Category I projects. Some projects used public works jobs for subsidized employment (Richmond); others paid part of the wage and hoped that the employer would pick up the full wage after a youth proved her/his worth (Seattle, Philadelphia). Denver provided subsidized employment for all project participants; the work crew experience occurred early in the youth's participation and was used to

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assess maturity, skills, and to build a sense of team work. All projects provided follow-up services after placement, checking with both youth and employer.

Table 8. Work Development and Placement Process for Youth Offender Category I Projects

Service	Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Subsidized Work Experience	DAYS	ETC/GCT	Aspira	YouthWorks	Safe Futures, KCSC
Job Development	DAYS	ETC/GCT	PWDC	YouthWorks	Pacific Associates
Job Search Support	DAYS	ETC/GCT	PWDC	YouthWorks	Pacific Associates
Job Placement	DAYS	ETC/GCT	PWDC	YouthWorks	Pacific Associates
Follow-up	DAYS	ETC/GCT	PWDC	YSB, NH, YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates

All five cities had alternative sentencing options for youth in place before their YODP was funded. In some communities, an alternative sentence may have meant returning to school as a condition of probation (Philadelphia), community service and restitution (Denver, Richmond, Seattle), or be specified by the court (Houston).

Alternative sentencing involved some form of community service activity in several projects. Denver courts had referred youth to community service activity through the Denver Area Youth Services (DAYS) partner for more than 25 years before the demonstration project. DAYS devised a six-week work crew experience that youth could complete during the work week or in an equivalent number of weekend sessions. In Richmond, community service involved a curriculum on community needs and problems from which each cohort of assigned youth had to choose a common project. Such projects might be reducing litter, keeping dogs on leashes, or removing graffiti. This program was designed by Opportunity West, one of the YODP partners in Richmond. Safe Futures, a partner in Seattle, devised art projects in the community to cover graffiti. Murals were painted on store walls, panels were placed over graffiti in bus shelters, and public trash barrels were painted in whimsical designs. By summer 2001, Philadelphia was planning to engage youth in community service through a new partner, Aspira. And, Houston was planning to offer community service opportunities through a partner, ETC, that once had such a program for youth assigned to community service.

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Intensive case management was an innovation in the employment and training model. All partners were adding case workers to meet the requirement to assist and follow-up on the youth participants. Intensive case management had been a part of the supervision model generally used by the juvenile justice system. Using it under the auspices of employment and training was a new approach that served to bond youth with caring adults.

Becoming aware of the gang involvement of the youth was also an innovation for the employment and training partners. While they knew that youth were involved with gangs, it was new for the partners to include the local anti-gang units and for them to learn gang colors and tags (graffiti).

Organizational Issues

Three organizational issues affected implementation of Category I projects. These involved the role of the lead organization, partnerships with the juvenile justice system, and leveraging resources. Each of these is now discussed.

Lead Organization

Organization of the project varied among grantees and the role of the grantee agency seemed to make a crucial difference in the implementation process. In Philadelphia and Seattle, the projects operated under the local workforce development council. In Denver, the project operated under the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD); in Richmond, the project operated under the Richmond Office of Employment and Training (Richmond Works); and in Houston, the project was operated by HoustonWorks (HW), which was linked to the Houston-Galveston Area Council (Workforce Investment Board).

In Seattle and Denver, the grantee contracted out day-to-day management to community-based and/or local government organizations. The project managers saw their roles as coaches and facilitators, assisting the contractor-project staff to work together in providing services. They met regularly with the staff to assist the partners to become true collaborators: sharing common vision, common terms, common definitions and reporting categories.

In Philadelphia and Richmond, the workforce development corporation and the employment training office respectively submitted an application prepared by others. As organizational problems arose, the grantees realized that they had to take a leadership role to move the projects forward. Eventually, both brought a substantial part of the service delivery activity itself into their organizations.

In Houston, the project remained with the grantee, but its implementation was delayed as the entire youth employment unit was reorganized to take advantage of the new WIA funding and the award of a large Youth Opportunity (YO) grant. Denver, too, received a new YO grant and the entire office of youth programs underwent restructuring. The operation of the YODP grant activity,

however, was protected from these disruptions by being under a contract to an outside agency and by having a grant manager who was not responsible for the internal reorganization.

Partnering with the Juvenile Justice System

The relationships that have been most mutually beneficial have been those between courts and probation officers, on the one hand, and employment and training agencies, on the other. The courts and probation officers reported that the employment and training program gave them a new set of constructive alternatives, especially for youth who had not succeeded in school or, for some reason, could not return to school. For employment and training agencies, probation officers gave them leverage with some youth, keeping them engaged long enough to see results of their efforts: earning a diploma, passing one or more of the GED tests, getting a driver's license, getting and keeping a job.

Developing a partnership between the employment and training agencies and the juvenile justice system, however, required time to develop the trust of courts and probation departments. Denver's main contractor, DAYS, had relationships for 27 years with components of the juvenile justice system as a contractor providing community service experiences to youth assigned alternative sentences. The Youth Services Bureau (YSB) in Richmond had had a similar, long-term relationship with the courts as a provider of aftercare services for youth offenders and constructive activities for youth in danger of criminal involvement. When RichmondWorks brought the case management function in-house, the new case managers faced the task of developing such relationships, and the probation department still recommended certain difficult youth to YSB for case management because of its depth of experience.

A strong relationship between the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Family Court did not exist prior to the YODP. Court staff reported that most youth assigned to school as part of their probation or parole failed to return to school. Philadelphia's project hired a former probation officer as project coordinator, and she made contact with the probation officers individually and through group presentations to introduce the project. Over time, probation officers began to make referrals to the program.

A similar effort was required in Houston where HoustonWorks had no previous connections to the juvenile justice system. The subcontractors did have experience with court-appointed youth, but it had still taken presentations to probation officers and a mandate from the Texas Youth Commission leadership to develop referrals.

In Seattle, two King County Superior Court aftercare workers were located in the same office as the rest of the YODP team. Probation officers were in and out of the facility and reported that they realized that referrals to the project meant that the youth would be monitored more hours of every day than they could possibly offer.

Leveraging Resources

The value of delivering youth employment services through partnerships was demonstrated in tangible, measurable ways and also in more subtle exchanges of resources and experience. Partners in several projects leveraged tangible exchanges that made their partnership mutually beneficial. In Houston, the Texas Youth Commission was willing to pay residential expenses of project youth at Gulf Coast Trades while the YODP grant paid for their aftercare and job placement. The King County Superior Court was willing to locate several case workers in the same building as the rest of the YODP team in White Center. The portion of rent the court paid made it possible for project staff to occupy the entire second floor of the building and to maintain a continuing presence to targeted youth. In Philadelphia, court-supervised youth were able to receive anger management and other mental health services through the Family Court while the court was reassured that the youth would receive the education assigned them through the project.

When Denver and Houston received large Youth Opportunity (YO) grants, the funds were used to expand services to YODP youth. In Denver, youth were sorted into either YO, YODP, or WIA eligibility categories, depending on their program eligibility and the youth's service needs. Where eligibility overlapped, YODP youth could receive certain services, such as drug counseling, under YO funding. In Houston, youth who were eligible for both YODP and Kulick funding were co-enrolled, and their individual service plans reflected that they received services from more than one grant. In Denver, as well, all the YO training was open to YODP staff, and YODP staff provided some of the training based on their almost-two years of experience. YODP staff received training in the youth coaching model and participated in presentations by police, probation officers, and officers from the Denver Anti-gang Coalition along with the YO grant staff.

Some valuable exchanges were not measurable in dollars. The Seattle YODP partners' staff shared common space , which provided benefits: Safe Futures' Cambodian-American staff taught the others on the staff how to interact with Asian youth and their families; the King County Superior Court case workers taught the other staff about the intricacies of court processes; and Pacific Associates taught the others more about youth employment, job placement, and employer follow-up. In Richmond, case workers from all the partners met every other Thursday to review the individual clients' cases. This provided an opportunity for more experienced case workers to share their expertise and for everyone to learn from dealing with difficult and complex cases.

Unique strengths complemented those of the central partners. The Denver Workforce Initiative, a program of the Piton Foundation in Denver, developed paper and pencil assessments and accompanying training programs for entry-level workers and their supervisors. "Learning to Work it Out" and "Managing to Work it Out" were work readiness tools for both inexperienced workers and for front-line managers who would be supervising them. The Denver Work Initiative trained the YODP staff in the use of the Learning to Work it Out instrument and in their "circles-of-support" approach to helping entry-level and dislocated workers succeed in their new jobs.

The Houston Kulick grant gave one YODP partner good experience in working with the youth in a YODP target neighborhood; Educational Training Corporation (ETC) staff already knew the youth, the culture of the neighborhood, and the gang pressures the youth experienced. In Philadelphia, Aspira had decades of experience working with low- income Hispanic families and the Philadelphia Anti-Violence Anti-Gang Network (PAAN) had comparable experience working with African American youth. In collaboration, they provided work readiness, anger management, and subsidized youth employment to YODP participants assigned to Aspira. In Houston, the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office (MAGO) offered the project resources to become aware of gang involvements and supported outreach workers who helped recruit youth into the YODP.

The most underdeveloped relationships for all the projects were between the project and the local school districts and with the employers. Officials in many projects reported that most project youth had not succeeded in school, either through truancy, learning difficulties, lack of motivation, or lack of aptitude for study. Officials also said that many project youth had been expelled from school for behavioral reasons, so schools were not interested in their return, and that many youth had decided not to return to a traditional school setting.

Initially the project designs, except Philadelphia's, understated how important it was for youth to complete a high school education or its equivalent for finding a job. As they came to realize the crucial importance of both the skills and the credential, the projects began to offer GED preparation classes themselves.

The schools were initially not responsive to inquiries, but during the project's second year the Denver Public Schools located two special education teachers and a counselor in the Youth One-Stop center building to prepare project clients for GED examinations. In Richmond, the project continued to provide participants with vouchers to the Sierra Adult School to prepare more intensely for GED exams. The district, in turn, referred youth to the project whom teachers feared would drop out of school without more encouragement.

Seattle began offering tutoring for the GED, and then Southwest Family Services, a community-based organization, provided a certified teacher for GED classes during the day. Using grant funds, the Highline School District initiated an alternative charter school in 2001, located on the first floor of the same building as the project, for all youth in the district who were two or more years behind their age-appropriate grade level. The district admitted several project youth in this charter school. Highline School District also agreed to offer high school credit, through their school-to-work program, for the work readiness training project youth received from Pacific Associates.

Philadelphia centered the project initially on the schools. But one reason the arrangement proved unworkable was that the schools lacked linkages with the employment training and job placement expertise within the community or with the juvenile justice system.

Several projects envisioned developing a network of employers who would be prepared to hire youth who received work readiness preparation under the grant. Denver developed such a network early in the project, and then found that the youth lacked skills for the jobs that were open. More generally, the projects found that the youth were not prepared to hold a position, lacking either the support systems, such as child care and stable transportation, or the personal maturity and skills to meet work expectations. The approach the projects subsequently took was to assist youth in finding entry level jobs in which they expressed some interest. The hope was that youth would remain engaged with project activities long enough to qualify for better paying and more career-oriented employment.

Each project was asked to use the Federal Bonding Program, an incentive program for employers that assists ex-offenders and other high-risk job applicants secure employment through the use of fidelity bonding. The bond provides the employer with insurance to cover any dishonest act by an employee. Virtually no youth were bonded as part of the YODP, however. There were tensions on both sides of the effort; project staff feared that urging employers to bond the youth would emphasize their criminal background; employers said they did not want to deal with federal paperwork.

A limit to the value of leveraging resources might be the loss of the Model Communities model in the process. Category I projects focused on neighborhoods in large cities that were characterized as high in poverty and in crime and delinquency. Several projects lost the neighborhood focus and others had overlapping programs.

Philadelphia's project focused initially on the youth in three high schools in North Philadelphia and one in West Philadelphia. As the project evolved, youth from all over the city were being referred to Youth Connect and were able to attend any of the 22 comprehensive high schools in the district. It was difficult to assess how much this changed current practice. Philadelphia youth were able to choose magnet schools anywhere in the city that matched their interests. The school district distributed evenly the rest of the youth population among the traditional high schools, so youth attending the four target schools may not have been from the neighborhood.

Richmond initially focused on youth in North Richmond. The project accepted youth from all over the city who were referred to the project by the court or probation department, however.

Both Denver and Seattle received YO funding for the youth in all their enterprise communities. YODP youth who were eligible for additional services under YO grants could receive them. It may not ever be possible to sort out the effects on the youth from one or more of these programs.

Training, Employment and Gang Suppression Activities

The Model Communities demonstration brought together intervention components not usually connected. Training youth offenders and youth in danger of criminal activity with the goal of

preparing them for the workforce was an innovation in the care of youth offenders in all five projects. The intensive case management the projects offered through the employment training delivery system was also an innovation in the services offered to youth offenders and youth at risk of criminal involvement. Probation and court staff remarked that the YODP provided every youth a relationship with at least one additional supportive adult. Intensive case management and employment training were the principal components of the YODP aftercare model.

Most projects provided direct services to youth through employment and training, intensive, intensive aftercare, and community service opportunities. Sites generally offered a similar set of core employment and training services, even if they were labeled differently, delivered by different mechanisms, or delivered with different degrees of internal coherence. Services provided project participants included:

- intake and assessment;
- case management;
- support for earning a high school diploma or GED certificate;
- work readiness and soft skills training;
- barriers-to-work removal (child care, transportation, tattoo removal);
- subsidized work experience;
- job-search support;
- job development;
- job-placement support; and
- post-placement follow-up.

Although the target neighborhoods were economically depressed, and all were in local enterprise communities, a major benefit for the projects was that the economies of the cities where the five Category I projects operated were strong and diversified during the demonstration period. At some point in visiting each project, someone would say, "Getting jobs is not the problem; keeping them is."

Reporting on YODP outcomes became dependent on the existence and quality of the data collection systems each project had or put into place for the project. The YODP grant required that projects develop a project-specific data reporting system. Model Communities cities were, at the same time,

in the process of switching their information reporting systems from the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) format to the WIA reporting format. Seattle adapted the JTPA reporting mechanism to provide data on the YODP project. Other projects depended on various partners to produce reports based on whatever information system format the agency was using at the beginning of the project. This approach provided several reports, all formatted differently and with no basis for knowing which youth in one agency report also were represented in another agency report.

During the first year of operation, Denver's MOWD revised its information reporting system to prepare a report that reflected the input of its partners. In Richmond, the only data came from the YSB records during the first year, but the WIA system was in place by summer 2001. In Philadelphia, schools kept their own records, but reports did not separate YODP youth from others in the district; nor did anyone keep consistent project-specific data until the project coordinator was hired. PWDC itself was shifting to its WIA-based information reporting system, called *Advocit*, but it was not operational by summer of 2001. Houston was also switching to a new information reporting system and, when it was ready during late spring 2001, it had not provided for a separate reporting category for youth in YODP activities.

During the first project year, DOL requested a quarterly report of key data elements as a nudge to the sites to collect comparable data. Project managers began to collect data on their own to respond to these requests. Table 9 provides the June 30, 2001 data as reported by projects.

Table 9. Reported Status of Clients on June 30, 2001, Category I Projects

Outcomes	Denver	Houston	Richmond, CA	Philadelphia	Seattle
Enrollment Goal	300	500	200	320	166
Total Enrollment	312	130	212	530	200
Employed	318*	88	131	36	113
Joined the Military	1	1	0	0	NR
In School	184	48	200	479	128
Work Readiness	121	67	138	184	85
Entered College	10	7	1	7	13
Incarcerated	28	3	25	16	12
Referred for Services	67	13	45	47	81
Follow-up Services	312	41	NR	244	NR

* Several youth had moved to a second or third job.

Studying large variations across projects in Table 9, it is possible to see that projects may have had common data names, but did not always have common definitions. Recruitment in Philadelphia involved completing a short application form whereas other projects did not consider a youth enrolled until the file for the youth included all the needed court and school documents, parental releases, social security cards, etc. Consequently, 286 youth who filled out the short application form in Philadelphia declined services when they understood the program better. Richmond reported no youth receiving follow-up services because YSB did not consider a youth "finished" at any time during the grant funding, and the youth the city enrolled had not been enrolled long enough to reach that stage.

The "employed" category included both subsidized and unsubsidized jobs. Denver's six-week work crew experience meant that all enrolled youth had subsidized employment. Seattle's graffiti abatement project also qualified as subsidized employment. Neither Philadelphia nor Houston were set up to offer comparable group experiences. Richmond had a strong privately funded summer youth employment program and the city provided subsidized employment in its various departments. Unsubsidized employment numbers, were they reported separately, would be considerably smaller for all the projects, reflecting the difficulties youth faced, the numbers still in school during the day, and the younger age groups from which youth were recruited or referred.

Neither Job Corps nor military options had been chosen by many Category I participants by summer 2001, partly reflecting the age of most project youth. Job Corps often required youth to leave home, which also had been a barrier. Staff reported that the Job Corps also required youth to be off probation or parole six months before they would be considered. Under current recruitment policies, staff reported that the military rejected youth who had criminal histories. It also proved difficult for youth to join if they held a GED certificate instead of a high school diploma.

Gang activity meant different things in different communities. In Philadelphia gang activity generally was not territorial as much as related to drug-crime activity. Denver experienced an in-migration of large well-established, multi-generational gangs from the west coast, in particular, with some local territorial youth gangs as well. Houston police estimated that about 90 percent of youth violence was related to gang activity. Houston had monolingual Spanish-speaking immigrant gangs, as well as gangs of American youth.

The section of Seattle targeted for the project had experienced marked increases in gang-related crime and violence. Some of it was traced to drug activity, but car theft was a big part of the youth crime in the area. Gangs in the White Center area of Seattle were predominately Asian, but Hispanic gangs also were developing as Latino families moved into an adjacent area. Youth seemed to mature out of the gangs in West Seattle, so gangs formed and reformed as youth aged. In Richmond, authorities had been addressing Asian and Hispanic youth gang activity in the southern part of the city through a Safe Futures grant. The project there was to extend the effort to other parts of the city, particularly to where African-American youth gangs operated.

While gang activity was part of the projects' awareness, the gang dimension was rarely overt in project programming. Gang-reduction activity through the projects stemmed primarily from diversionary tactics. Youth were kept busy during the normal work week with a combination of schooling, work readiness classes, subsidized employment, and then unsubsidized employment.

Facilities were chosen to be gang-neutral in most projects. Philadelphia realized during the first project year that three target high schools were in an active gang area, and court-assigned youth from elsewhere refused to attend. Philadelphia moved many project activities to the gang-neutral downtown office of the local workforce development council, and opened the project to other schools within the city. In Houston and Denver, project staff met with the city/county gang-reduction advisory committees.

Youth themselves were unlikely to divulge their gang affiliation. After a trusting relationship developed, youth might inform their case managers of their gang membership or affiliation. When Denver developed a formal GED preparation program at its youth One-Stop center, a gang reduction curriculum was inserted into the program as an enrichment activity. Having youth all day for classes at the center alerted the staff to the gang involvement of project participants. The Seattle project shared a "community mobilizer" with another youth project, and this person knew the gang-involved youth in the neighborhood. Participant recruitment in Seattle targeted leaders of these gangs, knowing that other youth might enroll if their leaders enrolled. One aspect of Seattle's work readiness/leadership development training through the Metropolitan YMCA was incorporation of the "Street Soldiers" method of reducing violence in speech and activity.

Keeping youth engaged was an issue for every project. Staff of projects were developing incentives and awards for youth who were meeting the goals of their learning plans. Others provided gift certificates to families who attended events planned by and for youth. Richmond also provided incentives for good attendance with weekend leadership retreats, field trips, and tickets to professional ball games. Those youth who seemed most easily engaged were those in projects where group activities were more important than individual activities. Youth appeared to enjoy the Denver work crews and the Seattle graffiti-abatement projects.

Collateral Services

All projects appeared dismayed by the deep and varied needs of project clients. There were staffing and budget implications of realizing that maturity, academic standing, work and life skills needed to be developed before youth could hold jobs. Several staff remarked to evaluators that "these are the kids nobody wants." Services for anger management, mental health or personal counseling were beyond the project scope and, as mentioned earlier in the report, projects were resourceful in obtaining some of these supplementary services.

Projects provided some of these services in various ways. In Philadelphia, for example, the Family Court referred youth internally for services. Denver obtained grant funding for a substance abuse

counselor who worked out of the youth One-Stop center, which was funded by a combination of funds from the YODP and a YO grant. Initially, Richmond had a certified substance abuse counselor as a case manager. When he left, the project referred youth to a counselor who had agreed to accept project participants under a fee-for-services arrangement. Seattle adapted an anger management curriculum for use in its GED program. And, Houston referred youth to counselors under a fee-for-services arrangement.

The process of meeting multiple needs demonstrated, however, the need for a more systematic collaboration between the projects and the health and mental health systems. Some services were obtained by special pleading, asking clinics or doctors to assist with tattoo removal and other services. Some relationships were established with personal and substance abuse counseling service providers who agreed to work on a fee-for-service arrangement. These arrangements were, however, for standardized service packages that included, for example, a specified number of visits to a counselor or a specified number of weeks in a day drug treatment program. When standard treatment was inadequate to meet the needs of youth, case managers often were frustrated by the realization that the youth were, for example, still using drugs and had little chance for holding a job.

Staff Recruitment

All projects had experience serving youth, and that good experience was an important boost for the projects. All of the organizations also developed ways of assessing and shaping their own operations during the project period. Hiring at the direct-service delivery level was needed, however, and was a problem for most projects. Training was reported to be helpful for the projects, but with staff turnover, awareness of the larger goals of the project was not always maintained.

Denver's Kulick grant had given MOWD the opportunity to develop a process for empowerment of local organizations and development of good collaboration among them. This model was used for the YODP as well. Seattle's WDC had managed other demonstration grants, and it understood their nature and that it was expected to sustain efforts after grant funding ended. Richmond, the smallest city in the group, nonetheless, had a city manager who served on the State WIA board. As a result, the city was especially aware of and became involved in the transfer from the old to the WIA process for employment and training. The city had, moreover, a good history of summer jobs programs and youth employability skills training. Philadelphia's PWDC also had extensive experience with welfare-to-work, and it built its services to youth upon that experience.

Directors of youth employment programs in Denver and Houston and supervisors of the project in the Philadelphia, Richmond, and Seattle workforce development councils were all veteran leaders in employment and training. Denver's project manager, who was hired specifically for the YODP, had years of juvenile justice management experience. His counterpart in Seattle was a career case manager with King County before being promoted to a supervisor for the YODP. The WDC leadership shared with the new staff its vision for youth employment for all areas of their communities and how the YODP fit into that vision.

Hiring front-line staff for an 18-month-long project led to rapid turnover, which threatened the learning process of the YODP partnerships. Richmond had a complete turnover in front-line staff over the project's course. Apparently, many staff began looking for stable employment almost as soon as they were hired. Denver also lost all but one of its original front-line staff. In Seattle, however, the front-line staff were still in place in summer 2001. The WDC staff believed that the county plan to maintain relationships with youth after the grant convinced front-line workers that some additional funding would be found to continue the program. Philadelphia's front-line staff had also changed markedly. The changes, however, had more to do with reorganization than with hiring and retention. In Philadelphia, moreover, it took a year to hire the probation officer who was responsible for connecting and following adjudicated youth. In Seattle, the King County Superior Court transferred veteran case workers to the project. The director of the Community Services Program of the King County Superior Court said it would take most of the project, if they had hired through the court.

Project orientation, conferences, and technical assistance trained the original project staff on the elements of the Model Communities integrated services model and provided experts to assist in their development on-site. With rapid turnover, however, the learning did not always transfer to new staff. It was the community-based staff who were most likely to either quit their job or move to another position during the project. They were typically young, college graduates or had completed some college. Several were testing the work for its career potential. Several of those interviewed had backgrounds similar to the youth with whom they worked. They also had a vision and enthusiasm for helping youth like their own contemporaries who did not progress out of poverty stricken neighborhoods, as they had done. In one project, replacement hires were all much more experienced case managers.

Organizational Learning

Leading partners of Category I sites varied in the expertise they brought to the partnership and in their views of how leadership should be developed among partners. Denver and Houston's leading partners had experience with youth offenders; Richmond with youth development and community service activities; Philadelphia with the schools; and Seattle with employment and training and youth development. A major outcome of the partnership experience was the cross-agency training and the development of shared leadership. The Seattle experience, described earlier, fostered learning among team members and then learning by the partnering agencies. The project model may be replicated elsewhere in the area, if the county-appointed research team can demonstrate its effectiveness in reducing delinquency. Denver taught a youth-coaching approach to service providers in its youth employment network, including YODP partners. Houston's PAYS was an evolving effort to develop a network of youth employment service providers who would develop a common vision and approach to youth employment and training, city-wide.

This cross-agency learning was more limited in Richmond. While case managers shared information that strengthened their work, partner agencies themselves were unable to resolve the fact that several partners were not living up to their contracts. Initially, there was no mechanism in place for

resolving the issues until the City of Richmond intervened. Rather than empowering the remaining partners, however, the city employment and training office believed that it needed to absorb many project responsibilities. In Philadelphia, too, there was little initial effort to build an open partnership among component partners, and the inability of some partners to accomplish their responsibilities became apparent only after repeated failures to meet deadlines for project reports. The PWDC also responded by absorbing many of the project's functions and responsibilities.

Target Population Recruitment

With the exception of Seattle and Philadelphia, the projects planned to recruit youth within the full 14-to-24 age range for a single program of services. As the projects evolved, however, staff learned that the needs of youth varied, depending upon their ages. Furthermore, and to their surprise, the projects were able to recruit more younger than older youth. The projects found that younger youth needed more support time before they were prepared for formal work settings, and that there was a greater urgency to get them into and/or keep them in school.

Philadelphia and Seattle had planned different strategies for older youth: Philadelphia planned to enroll them in special classes, called Twilight classes, that met in the late afternoon; Seattle had planned for the older youth to be served by Pacific Associates, whose main focus was to get them into jobs and "wrap" other services around their work schedules. As its project evolved, Philadelphia also attempted to assist youth find work that would wrap around their school schedules. Table 10 reports on the age and background characteristics of Category I recruits.

Table 10. Sources of Youth Clients in the Model Communities Youth Offender Projects

Characteristics	Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Numbers	312	130	530	212	159
Referrals	185 court; 127 recruited	Almost all recruited	179 court; 351 recruited	191 court 21 recruited	106 court 53 Recruited
Background	Diverse, mostly Hispanic	Diverse, mostly Hispanic	Diverse, mostly African-American	Diverse; mostly African-American	Diverse, mostly Asian
Age	Majority less than 18	22-24 YODP only	14-23; most 17-19	14-23; most 16-17	122 less than 18

Table 10 also demonstrates that the sites differed in the proportions of their youth clients referred to the projects from courts and probation officers. In both Denver and Houston, there had been a concerted effort to recruit youth from the target neighborhoods as well. Houston's ETC reported that youth walked into the projects because they heard that the program would help them find work. Denver, too, reported that youth were self-enrolling because they had heard that DAYS would help

them get a job. Denver also had made a concerted effort to make presentations at all high schools in the target neighborhoods. In Seattle, as described earlier, gang leaders were identified by the community mobilizer and recruited into the project, and other youth followed.

Technical Assistance

All Category I project teams participated in two YODP conferences sponsored by DOL and hosted by Research and Evaluation Associates. One conference was in Washington, DC, in September 1999; the other was in Tampa, Florida, in February 2000. Some conference sessions were for all categories of projects; others were for category-specific projects. The sessions addressed common issues and questions raised by YODP project staff.

Table 11. Technical Assistance Provided to Category I Model Communities Projects

Denver	Houston	Philadelphia	Richmond, CA	Seattle
Needs assessment 8/1999	Needs assessment 8/1999	Needs assessment 8/1999	Needs assessment 8/1999	Needs assessment 8/1999
Performance measurement 1/2000	Recruiting, processing and serving clients 4/2000	Implementation needs assessment 5/2000	Implementation needs assessment 3/2000	Bi-level case management 12/1999
Gang initiatives and aftercare 3/2000	Implementation needs assessment 6/2000	Programming and program implementation 7/2000	Substance abuse treatment and resources 6/2000	Client enrollment and processing 3/2000
Programming for 14-15 year olds, reemphasis on school completion 8/2000 telephone	Gang initiatives training with goals and objectives; juvenile justice research findings 9/2000	Plan to serve eligible youth and design of a client database 11/2000	Roles and responsibilities among partners 9/2000	Developing career opportunities (planned but postponed)
Anti-gang activity through the Metro-Gang Coalition and DAYS programs 8/2000	Clarifying roles, strengthening program components 2/2001	Implementation of new program design; review performance 3/2001		
Clarifying roles, strengthening program components 2/2001				

Projects requested or were offered assistance to improve their operations. (See Table 11for TA activities.) Several sessions found that organizational cultures impeded efforts for cross-agency partners to work as a team. Assistance on clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountability paths was important to the projects in Denver, Houston, Richmond, and Philadelphia. Seattle dealt with

these same issues through the intervention of the WDC planner who facilitated the staff meetings. Seattle requested help with bi-level case management and managing services across multiple agencies.

As mentioned earlier, several projects lacked one or another component of the integrated services model. Denver and Houston received several technical assistance visits to help them understand and develop programs for anti-gang initiatives. Philadelphia received assistance in understanding the limitations of the solely school-based approach and in helping to plan for a more community-based program. Richmond requested assistance in drug abuse intervention and treatment resources.

Sustainability

There was good political support in all the Model Communities cities for the YODP; yet the prospects for sustaining project activity after grant funding ended varied among them. All projects reported that the mayors, city managers, and other government leaders were pleased to have youth employment as a focus, especially finding jobs for the harder-to-help group of youth offenders.

For Seattle, project support had roots in the King County Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan (March 2000). King County leadership decided that it was not in the best interests of the youth or the county to build an additional youth residential facility. The YODP model for working with youth offenders appeared promising to them as an alternative. The county staff has been assigned the task of designing an outcomes evaluation process that they believe will demonstrate that the integrated services model would be more effective in helping project youth turn their lives around and be far less expensive to the county.

Staff at Philadelphia's Family Court reported their dismay at the number of youth under court supervision; 5,000 youth were under supervision yearly with an additional 2,500 returned to the court for protection or through bench warrants. They judged that fewer than 10% of the youth graduated from high school after returning from incarceration, and 90% of the youth returned to court were unemployed. YODP appeared to the court staff to provide a path for these youth by engaging them in academic activity, diploma or GED, and in assisting them to find and keep a job. Once the project coordinator had been hired, 80% of the youth assigned to return to school were actually doing so.

Denver and Houston planners had a vision that all youth in low-income neighborhoods would have access to case management support for finishing their educations and assistance in finding a job at liveable wages. They had procured grants to bring these visions into reality and had reorganized their youth employment infrastructure to provide youth with these services over the coming three or four years. Seeing this combination of grant funds and the new WIA youth funding as a window of opportunity, they were building youth One-Stop centers that would continue after grant funds ended. Staff trained under the grants to work with youth and youth offenders, in particular, were to staff these centers. It was too soon, however, to assess how successful these efforts would prove to be.

Aspects of every project were likely to continue after grant funding ended. Some partners would continue to collaborate, for example, and it was likely that the court-probation and employment training agency partnerships, which were mutually beneficial, would continue. More specifically, court-supported services in every city would continue and allow leveraging of some services for court-supervised youth in employment and training programs. The following is a synopsis, community by community, of the sustainability status of Category I projects in spring 2001:

- **Denver** received DOL funding for an additional year of operation under the demonstration. The partnership was expected to continue after the demonstration period. The new MOWD executive director reported that youth programs were a model for the adult programs, and he intended to realign the rest of MOWD to foster collaborations similar to those generated by the new YO, WIA-youth programs, and the YODP. He was committed to ensuring that youth offenders had access to all youth services. Partners reported they have been able to leverage funding by using each other's services, rather than duplicating them. The one service that would be unlikely to continue without special funding was intensive case management, which had proved so important with the target population.

- **Houston** received a no-cost time extension for an additional year of operation under DOL funding. Houston also had received a new YO grant, and four youth One-Stop centers were envisioned as part of that grant. The youth offender staff expected to be assigned to these centers after the YODP grant, so that experienced staff would be available to serve youth offenders in each target neighborhood. Once more, intensive case management was unlikely to continue because case loads at centers would prevent it. The partnership of service providers had been expanded into PAYS, which included providers for employment training, education, mental health, substance abuse, and other services that youth might need. In the future, services would be provided on a fee-for-service basis, rather than through contracts that provided for a wide range of services. Under PAYS, youth would receive vouchers for elements of their individual service plans, and they were free to take those vouchers to any provider in the PAYS network.

- **Philadelphia's** project remained in a developmental phase in summer 2001, and it had received a no-cost time extension for an additional year of operation under DOL funding. The PWDC had been working to develop networks of services within the city to which youth could be referred. And, the PWDC was developing experience in the area of youth employment. PWDC's leadership reported that additional grants would be needed to maintain the intensive case management the YODP provided. The project staff had assembled an advisory committee. The committee included judges and lawyers from Family Court and staff from the School District of Philadelphia and other youth-serving community-based organizations who intended to find funding to keep in place a program of services to the court-supervised youth.

- **Richmond** received an additional year of funding from DOL. Staff reported that, after the demonstration, all of its youth would be able to go to One-Stop centers being designed around the community for employment and training assistance. RichmondWorks staff believed that it had all the skills necessary to serve this population without supplementary services. Community-based organizations reported that the target population needed special care and support, and they planned to provide such care and support using whatever funds they could find. The intensive case management that youth received through the YODP grant was not likely to continue. Richmond reported that it, too, would shift to a fee-for-service arrangement for youth services. Youth would receive vouchers for services that were part of their individual plans and take them to any service provider on a list approved by the city.

- **Seattle's** project also received funding from DOL to operate an additional year. King County planned to continue providing services to the White Center community near Seattle, and members of the partnership planned to continue working with each other. The County Community Service Division and the King County Superior Court had begun a study of the effectiveness of the YODP as a step in recommending similar programs in other parts of the county where school drop-out and youth crime rates were high.

SUMMARY

The Category I projects evolved over the demonstration period to incorporate all elements of the model specified by DOL in the original project design. In the process of implementing the models, the projects also evolved in their understanding of the needs of project youth and the requirements of operating effective youth employment services in their communities.

During the course of the process evaluation of Category I projects, evaluators also noted:

- The use of grants and vouchers increased services for YODP beyond expectations.

- The deep needs of the youth and the large number of younger youth enrolled in the project combined to reduce the number who were placed into full-time and unsubsidized employment by the end of the demonstration period.

- To a large extent, most jobs that the youth obtained were entry-level service positions, which raised the concern that they were not moving to career-oriented positions or earning livable wages. It will be several years, however, before it will be possible to report whether these jobs served as an interim arrangement while the youth finished school and/or received other needed services as they progressed toward joining the workforce.

- All five Category I projects will continue for at least another year, and several of the projects were making more fundamental changes in their youth employment services organizations

to continue offering services after that. The intensive case management element, however, was the most likely aspect of the projects to be discontinued after the demonstration period.

- The project's fundamental innovation — that of bringing the juvenile justice and youth employment training services into collaboration — proved to be valuable for all Category I projects. It appeared that every project would maintain this partnership after grant funding ended.

- Youth interviewed during the course of the demonstration reported how important it was for them to get good jobs and that it was this potential promise that served as a major motivation for them to participate in the demonstration.

- In general, youth in all Category I projects were moving through the process of gaining an education, working on personal and life issues, and preparing for work. To gain insight into the long-term value of the demonstration model, it will be important for the Model Communities project staff to monitor the ability of project participants to acquire full-time, unsubsidized employment.

Section III

CATEGORY II - EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH OFFENDERS INITIATIVE

Category II projects — those in the Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative — were asked to meet two key requirements. According to the Solicitation for Grant Announcement (SGA) issued by the Department of Labor (DOL), these projects were to:

- provide comprehensive school-to-work (STW) education and training within the juvenile correctional facilities and
- provide follow-up services and job placement services as youth left these facilities and returned to the community.

In addition, the DOL specified that "comprehensive services developed under this project will serve as a model for other juvenile corrections facilities across the country."

Ohio was the only Category II project examined in the process evaluation conducted by Research and Evaluation Associates. As stated earlier, Category II projects in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Tallahassee, Florida, were evaluated separately by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

While the grant was awarded to the Ohio Department of Youth Services, the project was administered by the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs. The Ohio project consisted of two youth offender residential correctional facilities: one run by the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) in Loudonville and the other run by Cuyahoga County in Hudson.

Although the two YODP project sites differed significantly, this section of the report, when possible, discusses the two facilities as one project. When necessary, however, the facilities are discussed separately.

Section Organization

Evaluators made three visits to the Ohio project to assess the grantee's ability to address requirements under the demonstration grant. Findings in this section consider nine areas of interest based upon the visits:

- Planning the Project;
- Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships;

- Organizational Issues;
- Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities;
- Collateral Services;
- Staff Recruitment;
- Target Population Recruitment;
- Technical Assistance; and
- Sustainability.

FINDINGS

Planning the Project

The proposal for Ohio's YODP was submitted by the state DYS with the intention of developing strong STW systems in two residential correctional facilities. The grantee also proposed to support transition of youth back into their communities with model aftercare service programs. Cuyahoga County youth comprised the target population. Responsibility for implementing the grant was assigned to the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs/Division of Treatment Services (CCDJA/DTS). The project's ultimate goal was to reduce recidivism among youth offenders within the county.

The grant proposal was written after an internal review of how youth transition from correctional facilities back into the community demonstrated there was a disconnection between institutional training and employability. According to the DYS proposal:

> there are "inadequate links between the existing institution curriculum and the curriculum in community schools; few students are prepared to find employment in emerging technologies and occupations; there is little access to work-based learning; and these students do not typically participate in remediation services or pursue a coherent pathway. Many do not stay in school, and if they do, they are behind in skills, grade level placement and credits. If employment is pursued upon return to the community, they typically do not have core abilities to succeed in any but minimum wage positions with little in the way of career prospects. In essence, they do not have much hope or vision for the future."

The target population within the two facilities consisted primarily of youth offenders from Cleveland and East Cleveland. While the overall poverty rate in Cleveland was reported to be 22%, the poverty rate of households in the neighborhoods from which the incarcerated youth came was more than 50%. In addition, the high school dropout rate in the Cleveland and East Cleveland communities was reported to be 58% and 50%, respectively.

Youth offenders typically came from poor, single-headed households without a member gainfully employed, had substance abuse problems, and had failing records at school. The youth were characterized as lacking involvement in sports, church, or other constructive outlets. While African American youth comprised 32% of the combined population of the two targeted cities, they accounted for 61% of delinquency filings and 72 % of youth serving in secure detention.

During the demonstration period, Cleveland's economy was returning to robustness after years of losing manufacturing jobs to other parts of the United States and to companies offshore. The new economy was a mixture of the old industries and newer high technology-based industries. There were ample jobs for youth, but in general the youth were not prepared for them.

Project planning focused on developing the capacity for Information Technology (IT) training in the two correctional facilities to prepare the youth for the kind of employment opportunities that were growing in the Cuyahoga County area. Although this sharply focused approach to occupational training did not match skills and interests of many youth, the IT training provided an introduction to computers and computer literacy for many youth.

At the time the project was being planned, Cuyahoga County was in the process of implementing a plan to redesign its approach to juvenile justice called "Comprehensive Strategy for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (September 2000)." The county plan was part of and partially funded through the state "Reclaim Ohio" planning effort. Some recommendations from the planning process would affect the youth offender population and the plan called for a multi-agency and community effort to provide:

- a better risk and personal needs assessment before court-assigned sanctions;
- a graduated sanctions process that reduced the number of youth assigned to secure detention and reduced over-crowding at the YDC;
- alternative home placements for youth whose home situations placed them at risk of court involvement; and
- a special concern to understand and reduce the disproportionality of minority youth under court supervision and in confinement.

For the longer term, the plan called for a thoughtful delinquency prevention program with special provisions for youth 0-5 years old, 6-13 years old, and 14-18 years old. The delinquency prevention plan called for efforts to strengthen the family, support core social institutions, provide for quick intervention when delinquent behavior occurred, and to identify and control the small group of serious, violent, and chronic offenders.

Planning was primarily inter-institutional and involved DYS, the Juvenile Court, public schools, technical centers, faith-based service providers, and the Greater Cleveland Growth Association (the equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce). An advisory board consisted of representatives of each of these groups, with the DYS director as one co-chair and the director of CCDJA as the other. The state set a goal for the project of reducing youth offender recidivism by 40%. It should be noted that no youth or family representatives served on this committee.

The initial plan had been to work with the Indian River School and the Cuyahoga County Youth Development Center (YDC). After funding was received, the Indian River School was dropped in favor of the Mohican Juvenile Correctional Facility (MJCF) because Mohican had the space for a computer center.

Mohican Juvenile Correctional Facilities: Mohican is a state-run, all-male, high-security facility for youth offenders with substance abuse problems or who had committed a serious crime or a series of lesser offenses repeatedly. The institution is three hours driving time from Cleveland and situated in the town of Masillion, Ohio. At the time of the demonstration, 80% of youth serving in the facility were members of minority groups, 91% had substance abuse problems, and 90 % had been suspended from school at least once.

The facility includes four living units, each with about 40 beds in a dormitory and two isolation units. There also is a gym and a recreation room. Most of the corridors are dimly lit and unattractive, but the classrooms are brightly lit and full of resource materials. The institution has a strong management information system.

Youth Development Center Facilities: The YDC is a county-run co-educational facility for youth offenders 12-18 years of age. YDC youth are mostly convicted of minor offenses, mostly male, and mostly members of minority groups. The center is about one hour's driving time north of Cleveland in the town of Hudson, Ohio, in Summit County. The facility operates under the auspices of the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners through the Department of Justice Affairs (DJA). At the time of the demonstration, youth serving at the facility had been directly referred by the Cuyahoga Juvenile Court. Sentences were open-ended, with discretion left to the DJA. The usual sentence was for six months.

The on-site school, Harry Eastman, operates as part of the Cleveland City Schools. At the time of the demonstration, it had a full complement of teachers for traditional, special education, and

vocational education classes. Its computer lab had 22 computers; the room was bright and full of resources.

Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships

The original partnership plan included DYS, Cuyahoga DJA, the Ohio STW office and Region 8 STW office, Youth Visions, Inc., and the local office of the Education Development Center (EDC) headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. By the time the proposal was funded, the Region 8 STW office was disbanding for funding reasons and its representative on the proposed advisory committee had withdrawn from the project.

Responsibility for the Cleveland School District was moved from the School Board to the Mayor's Office, and the STW curriculum in the Cleveland Schools was dismantled. The school district was divided into six with the sixth district comprised of alternative schools. In East Cleveland, Shaw Alternative School, established in fall 2000, planned to begin an Information Technology STW curriculum. By spring 2001, it still had not been implemented.

When the proposal was funded, DYS prepared memoranda of understanding with CCDJA to implement the project and to establish the IT program at YDC and at the Mohican facility. DTS was to provide aftercare, IT training, and follow-up services to youth returning to the county from incarceration at YDC.

Youth returning to the community from Mohican were supervised by the regional DYS parole officer. Youth received work readiness, IT training, and placement services provided through CCDJA contractors. When youth completed their parole under state supervision, they were referred to CCDJA contractors for case management.

The project staff and DYS met monthly to exchange information and approaches to youth development. The partnership led to sharing resources in substance abuse treatment. They agreed to use a common risk-management instrument, the Youth Offender-Level of Service Inventory (YO-LSI). They also developed a common aftercare relapse prevention support group for youth from both Mohican and YDC based on the Therapeutic Community Model. And, the project staff began developing an integrated case management planning process modeled on the DYS integrated case management approach.

The partnership evolved as the full range of youth needs became more apparent. DYS received Tobacco Trust Fund money to provide extra services to youth offenders. CCDJA wrote a series of grants that provided new partners and about $1 million in additional funds and in-kind services for YODP clients. Grants came from:

- the 21st Century Fund,

- Juvenile Justice Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JJAIBG),
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF),
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and
- the Byrne Law Enforcement Fund.

With partial DYS funding and $450, 000 in other grant funds, CCDJA contracted with Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry Association (LMM) for work readiness, life skills training, pre-employment, job development, and case management services at various organizations in Cleveland. It also contracted with Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) for work readiness, life skills training, IT training and case management at the East Cleveland Community Center and at its west county site.

Both LMM and YOU were mandated to collaborate with the county or state probation officers and other staff at DTS for coordinating case management, education, and substance abuse treatment. Some grant funds were used to pay all subsidized employment stipends. Byrne Law Enforcement funds supported two job developers at CCDJA (who were also the IT instructors for youth under age 16) .

HUD funds were used to provide alcohol and drug treatment services through Catholic Charities and support for the Alternatives to Street Crime program. Juvenile Justice Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JJAIBG) funds were allocated to the Bridge School (an alternative school) IT program at Mt. Sinai Ministries and to Fellowship Ecumenical Ministries (FEM). The FEM was a coalition of Black Baptist churches that had a "one church-one child" adoption program.

The Cuyahoga County Children's Comprehensive Services (CCS) agency received a contract to deliver intensive family weekends every other weekend at YDC. CCDJA provided in-kind support, and CCS obtained vans to bring the families to YDC where family groups and the incarcerated family member received emotional therapy for negative family behavior patterns, communication, and substance abuse issues.

A proposal had been prepared by CCDJA, with letters of support from the DYS leadership, to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to obtain funds for substance abuse treatment service alternatives that would include both intensive out-patient and short-term residential care. There was a special need for additional short- term residential care for those who had not succeeded during intensive day-treatment. Without such an alternative, and to get additional treatment, youth had to violate their probation and be returned to six months of confinement.

CCDJA also applied for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds, again with DYS letters of support, for additional services. The plan for expanding the partnership depended on the successful outcome of these pending grants. The hope was to add Sylvan Schools, Goodwill Industries, Vocational Guidance Service and Cuyahoga Community College to the partnership to increase opportunities for education, work experience, and subsidized employment.

Organizational Issues

Education

The STW curriculum began in February 2000 at the Mohican facility and in mid-April 2000 at the YDC. The first youth released from the facilities to the community for aftercare services occurred in June 2000. EDC received a contract to prepare STW curriculum materials for the two schools and gave an orientation to STW approaches to education.

The Harry Eastman School at YDC operated under the Cleveland Public Schools, using its mandated curriculum and standards. The YODP funded Eastman's STW IT program. The Cleveland Board of Education provided the wiring, and the grant provided computers and a "smart board" (a large white screen connected to a computer for displaying information and graphics and for writing as on a chalk board). The teacher's salary came from the YODP grant.

The school at Mohican was a registered charter school under the auspices of DYS, but it was not accredited by the state. Mohican's IT program was designed to operate in three classes a day, each lasting one and one-half hours. Courses were coordinated with substance abuse treatment sessions, GED preparation, and interventions designed to change the behavior of youth and help them reorient their lives after release. The IT teacher's salary came from the YODP grant. Youth were unable to earn credits toward high school graduation because the school was not accredited.

The major innovation proposed by the grantee was implementation of a STW model, more so than the addition of IT classes. While teachers and administrators reported they were pleased with the computers and the addition of a technology instructor, these new classes served more to augment traditional school approaches, rather than to represent a reorganization of the curriculum to accommodate a STW design.

Because there were no direct accountability paths linking the two institutions to CCDJA, the agency was virtually powerless to insist that the correctional facilities rethink their curriculum. The dismantling of the STW office in Cleveland and the lack of STW in East Cleveland essentially defeated implementation of the core of the Category II model — a STW curriculum that was to be supported when the youth returned to their home school districts.

Moreover, the relationship between the project and the Cleveland Schools was not well-developed and had implications for youth returning to Cleveland. Youth generally were returning to traditional school settings upon release, despite the presence of alternative school programs in the district. The enrollment limit at alternative schools was generally met in September, so youth returning to the community over the course of the school year were usually unable to gain admission.

Traditional schools were reluctant to admit or re-admit these youth because they were typically under-skilled for their age and before their incarceration had poor records of attendance and behavioral problems. Returning to school was, however, a condition of probation. One traditional Cleveland high school of several hundred students had admitted seven or eight students returning from incarceration, which the school's assistant principal thought was an excessive number for the school to handle. These students, he said, required too much time and teachers were not social workers.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, a new alternative school operating on the western side of Cleveland, had agreed to accept youth on a rolling basis during its first year of operation. By spring 2001, several youth returning from Eastman School at YDC had been admitted and were doing well. The school enrolled 125 youth, all achieving below grade level, and attempted to have them complete two grades in one academic year by attending classes Monday through Friday and on some Saturdays. Youth were closely monitored by the school, probation officers, and case managers. The school was committed to using interactive, hands-on teaching methods and to building a sense of community among youth, teachers, cafeteria workers, office staff, and custodians. Efforts to include parents were not very successful, however. School leaders, nonetheless, hoped that participation of parents would improve.

In East Cleveland, one alternative school, Shaw Alternative High School, intended to establish a STW curriculum, but had not been able to do so. Shaw was a new alternative school beginning its first full year of operation in fall 2000. At the time, the school was still completing renovations to a church school it used during the week and was still establishing systems for school functions and activities. A small number of youth had returned to this school rather than to a nearby traditional school. The alternative school's vision was to assist youth, who were generally under-skilled for their age, to catch up to their grade-appropriate level on time to complete upper division work at the nearby traditional school.

There was only one vocational education school in Cleveland, and parents needed to intercede on behalf of their children, if they were to be enrolled. Parents of incarcerated youth were not likely to do this, however. The IT training the youth received at YDC and Mohican was seen as a way to prepare youth for business classes in traditional high schools. The training, moreover, provided basic preparation for other high school classes, training these youth might have missed if not for the project. IT training, envisioned as a vocational preparation, appeared more as a strategy to "level the playing field" for youth whose families and neighborhood centers lacked technology available to other students.

Aftercare

The project provided eight assessment specialists, or case managers, for YODP youth returning from YDC. In addition, it provided two job developers, two family therapists, and one anger management-probation specialist. There also was another staff member who served as a transition specialist at the YDC facility. None of these positions was supported directly with YODP funds.

Transition back to the community began 90 days after incarceration, a time when a youth's needs were better understood, and when staff were more knowledgeable about how a youth was responding to interventions by the project. Each Wednesday case managers went to YDC to meet with youth entering the 90-day period and who would be assigned to them upon release. The meeting, which also included YDC staff, addressed behavior issues, offenses committed, school experiences, and established goals for youth leaving the facility.

Thirty days before release, the supervisor of case managers returned to YDC to meet with youth who would be released that month. The agenda covered the school transition, special needs and concerns of the youth.

When youth were released, the van bringing them back to Cuyahoga County came to the CCDJA office at 1736 West Third Street in downtown Cleveland. There they completed paperwork and signed releases so the staff could obtain information from schools and elsewhere. They also were enrolled in an employment and training program (CCDJA for 12-15 year olds; LMM and YOU for 16-18 year olds).

Each youth received a monthly calendar listing their daily activities. There were activities planned for the youth every day after school, Monday through Thursday. The activities also included drug tests and schedules of other meetings. After processing was finished, the youth waited for a parent or guardian to pick them up. Daily activities began the following day.

Four rules were specified for youth as part of their aftercare services:

- first, curfew began at dusk;
- second, youth were required to attend school and assigned meetings;
- third, youth were prohibited from using drugs or alcohol; and
- fourth, youth were required to wear "appropriate dress" when they came to the CCDJA office and they were not allowed to bring friends with them.

Case managers met assigned youth one or two times each week at school. In addition, case managers took turns visiting the LMM and YOU sites every day activities were scheduled. This meant that

youth were observed by a case manager three or four days a week and that the case managers knew all youth participating in the project. If a youth was absent from an assigned activity, the case manager followed up with home visits and contacted the probation officer. Despite this system, attendance by youth varied, especially for IT training sessions.

Younger youth came to CCDJA Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday for pre-employment and IT training. Older youth were assigned employment training on these days at LMM or one of the YOU sites. Youth were tested weekly for drugs and anger management was offered weekly as well. (Drug testing was mandatory; anger management was required, if assault had been part of a youth's offense.)

Youth received work readiness training during their first month in the project and staff hoped that the youth would then find jobs and start work. LMM offered job placement services for the older youth and two job developers at CCDJA offered job placement services for younger youth. (The job developers at CCDJA were also the IT instructors.)

Based on discussions with project participants, case managers recognized that young women in the project needed special time and attention. Consequently, case managers designed "Young Women of the Future," a 12-week discussion program for groups of eight. Discussions addressed questions and issues that were raised about sexuality, drug use, and personal abuse. Attendance was voluntary.

Youth returning from the Mohican facility returned to the care of the youth development specialist and job developer at the regional DYS office. The parole officer was a veteran drug intervention specialist, and he and the job developer had worked together for several years. The case manager received a case within 10 days of the youth arriving at MJCF. He visited with the youth during his monthly visits to the facility as well as with parents before release.

Sixty days before release, the case manager in Cleveland and the Mohican staff developed a unified case plan for the youth's release process. The YO-LSI risk-assessment instrument determined some aspects of the release plan. After their release, youth were contacted daily during their first five days home. For the next 60 days, a youth who was considered high risk was contacted four times a week; otherwise he was contacted twice a week. Unless there was trouble, the level of contact dropped after 60 days.

After a youth completed parole, which could be six, nine, or 12 months, he received no further follow-up from DYS. If the case was confidential, no notice was sent to LMM or YOU when a youth's status changed; otherwise, the youth continued to receive services at LMM or YOU. In many cases, youth were not referred by DYS to the county for services.

All aftercare specialists were concerned there were few options for a youth whose home situations were detrimental to the developmental process of aftercare. There were no half-way houses or short-

term foster care provisions for these youth. The DYS staff wished that youth could receive high school credit for work they accomplished while incarcerated.

There were tensions between the staffs at YDC and CCDJA. The YDC program was considered a training school program while the CCDJA saw the failure to provide therapeutic interventions to youth as a missed opportunity. More specifically, anger management, substance abuse and other personal problems were not dealt with until youth were released into CCDJA's care. No youth on medication were assigned to YDC, but youth with attention deficit disorders were not referred for services or went without medication.

The CCDJA staff were specialists with master's degrees and advance certifications in areas of special education, substance abuse, family therapy, and other similar specialties. Only three YDC staff members who were engaged in the release process were trained at the master's degree level; none of the direct service staff was trained at this level.

The difference in approaches to youth corrections became more evident as the CCDJA staff attempted to inaugurate the integrated case management process, which was similar to the one used by DYS. The CCDJA staff wanted release plans to reflect assessments of a youth's needs for specialized services and interventions with the family. The YDC staff, however, did not share this urgency. One veteran CCDJA staff member described the relationship between the two agencies as traditionally awful, although getting better from both sides.

Category II projects required the development of operating partnerships, especially when youth were being released back to their communities. In general, the Ohio project experienced relationship-building issues during the second year of the grant that projects in other YODP categories had addressed earlier. Although the partnership improved communication among agencies offering services to the same target population, some issues remained to be addressed. There were, for example, communication loops that left one or another party in the dark, depending on the subject of the communique and the staff members' place in the network.

The core innovation for Category II projects was to be the insertion of a STW curriculum in youth correctional facilities. By spring 2001, however, the Ohio project did not have in place a strong STW curriculum. Organizational innovations primarily involved aftercare services offered by Cuyahoga County, which made the Ohio project more like a Category I project than a Category II project.

Training and Employment Activities

Mohican Juvenile Correctional Facility: Half of the youth at Mohican were in remedial classes; 25% were in GED preparation classes; and the remaining 25% were working at grade level. Typically, fewer than half of these youth returned to formal education in any form after release from the center.

Each of the eight social workers at Mohican had an average case load of 20 clients. Four case load supervisors and a psychologist were on staff, and a psychiatrist was on call for counseling and to provide medication as needed.

IT classes began at the facility in April 2000. The youth were divided among the three classes being offered. IT classes at the facility focused on IT careers, career pathways, Windows 98 set up, and introduction to Microsoft, including Word, PowerPoint, Access, Excel, and Paint. Students also learned keyboarding and how to install software. As part of the introduction to IT careers, a guest speaker came to the facility to talk to the youth. The major drawback of the training system was that youth arrived and left the facility throughout the academic term.

Since installation of the IT course at Mohican in April 2000, 68 youth had completed training. Not all project youth, however, were taking the IT classes. Some lacked the educational skills to benefit from the training while others were not interested in the course. At the time of the third evaluation site visit in spring 2001, 38 youth were from Cuyahoga County and 23 were actually in IT training.

After Release, MJCF: Sixteen youth had been released from Mohican and returned to Cuyahoga County since the beginning of the IT classes. Youth released from the facility were provided employment and training services through LMM and YOU.

The DYS parole officer was a veteran substance abuse counselor who coordinated aftercare services. In addition to case management, the DYS aftercare specialist coordinated substance abuse interventions for the youth with the county's DTS and organized a relapse prevention effort that included both Mohican and YDC youth (the only treatment that served older and younger youth together). The aftercare specialist coordinated treatment services with the LMM case manager.

At LMM, youth received one month of intensive services, including employability training, twice a week for one and one-half hours a day. Youth also were assisted with interpersonal relationships, pre-employment skills, job development skills, and job placements. And, they received from LMM follow-up after job placement and case management after their parole was completed. YOU provided youth with an IT course one day a week. Youth were paid $5.50 per hour for attending the IT class and received $100 if they stayed with it for 60 days. Both LMM and YOU provided monthly reports on services delivered, attendance, and reasons for terminations of participants.

Many youth reported that they were not interested in IT careers and that few jobs they held used the skills they were taught at Mohican. Some youth also resented the time required to take the bus to class when they were not interested in the material being taught. Other youth said the IT class covered the same material taught at Mohican. Staff, nonetheless, encouraged youth to continue with the IT classes so that they did not lose the skills they had acquired. The YOU teacher reported there was no way to know which students had covered what material. Staff members were working on ways to let the YOU instructor know what the youth were taught at MJCF.

All those serving youth maintained reporting systems. CCDJA also was developing an integrated project information reporting system that would make it possible to see what services a youth had received and to track her/his progress through the program.

There also were communication problems between assessment specialists and the LMM program staff. The assessment specialists sometimes would excuse a youth from class, but not tell the LMM staff about it. These communication problems were on-going throughout the project and documented in LMM monthly reports.

Youth rarely found work in IT. Arrangements with IT employers failed to develop, partly because many youth were too young to work full time. Some youth also lacked strong enough IT skills to hold IT jobs. LMM staff reported that even after six weeks of employability training, it was still hard to find jobs for youth. Although DYS had used the Federal Bonding Program in the past, it did not use it during the YODP.

None of the youth in the project had connected to the Job Corps, which had been recommended in the SGA by DOL. Job Corps staff reported that they allowed youth to apply only after they had completed six months of parole, although this restriction was not formal Job Corps policy. Further, mandatory drug testing discouraged some youth from applying. Table 12 reports the status of project participants on June 30, 2001, for both the Mohican and the YDC youth.

Table 12. Status of Clients, Ohio Project, June 30, 2001

OUTCOMES	
Enrollment Goal	525
Enrolled	170
Referred for Services	114
Work Readiness Training	168
In School	170
Employed	44
Joined Military	0
Entered College	1
Receiving Follow-up Services	0
Incarcerated	12

Youth Development Center: All youth at YDC were enrolled in the Eastman School, a sixth grade to twelfth grade school operated by the Cleveland City Schools. At the time of the first

evaluation site visit in May 2000, the computer laboratory had not been completely set up, nor had any youth been released to the project in Cuyahoga County. By spring 2001, an IT class was being taught at Eastman School five days a week, and teachers had begun to ask the IT teacher for assistance in designing their class plans to include IT exercises.

The IT teacher at YDC emphasized mathematics and science software in her computer classes because these were the curriculum components the youth were most likely to fail during the standard testing sequence prescribed by Cleveland Schools. In addition, she taught youth how to make posters, newsletters and announcements for various YDC activities. Computer art classes also were introduced to the youth. One of these was "Beautiful Woman," an exhibit of autobiographical information and computer-generated pictures of female participants.

Some youth had begun to come to the computer lab on their own and to work on individual projects. The teacher did not think they were operating at the level of sophistication needed for employment in IT fields, however, but she did think that they had become comfortable with computers and would be able to use them in high school classes when they returned home.

YDC also was attempting to provide more connections between youth and their parents and between the youth and their aftercare specialists. Cuyahoga County Office of Childrens' Comprehensive Services provided parents with transportation to visit their children while they were incarcerated. The office also offered Cuyahoga Family Workshops at YDC for youth and their families on visiting days.

DTS placed an assessment specialist at YDC, who served as a bridge between youth there and the aftercare program in Cleveland. He identified the needs of the youth, calculated their risk profiles, and helped them determine their goals. These were shared with the case managers before youth were released into their care. The YDC superintendent reported that the presence of the assessment specialist on campus was creating better communication about aftercare and better understanding of how to help youth successfully transition back into their communities.

With the assessment specialist on campus, the practice of developing a release plan for each youth was being resumed. Toward this end, the aftercare specialist had developed a three-month planning template to use with each youth. Before release, all segments of the program were considered and designed into a youth's release plan, including unfinished business and the youth's educational, mental health, and special needs. The hope was that the release plan would lead to inter-agency cooperation to provide treatment before and after a youth's release.

After Release, YDC: By spring 2001, 109 youth had returned to Cuyahoga County from YDC. After release most YDC youth were assigned to LMM, YOU, and DTS for services. The youth visited assessment specialists in the downtown Cleveland DJA building. If youth were under 16 years of age, they also received their IT training at the downtown site while older youth received these services through YOU and LMM.

YOU Eastside provided an IT training course once a week and YOU Westside provided job training to older youth. CCDJA hired two job developers who offered employability training, IT classes, and community service opportunities to 12-15 year olds. In these sessions, youth were taught how to complete applications and prepare resumes. Bus passes were given to them to come to the DTS office and also to older youth to get to the YOU service sites.

Assessment specialists located community service placements for the youth in Habitat for Humanity, child care centers, and other nonprofit and community agencies. Once the youth were placed, they received minimum wage pay for 15 hours per week.

If youth worked full time, they were excused from the IT class; if they worked part time, they were required to continue to attend the class. Although younger youth were supposed to come to the DTS office for IT classes, they were not considered in violation of probation if they: went to a YOU or LMM office for class on a day they did not have to see the assessment specialist; received anger management training; or took a drug test.

Most youth were younger than most workforce participants. Because of this, it will be several years before project designers are be able to judge the impact the project's intervention had on the kind of jobs the youth will obtain when they become age-eligible. The status of these youth participants as of June 30, 2001, is reported in Table 12 (page 49).

Collateral Services

Youth received work clothing as needed, as well as bus tokens to pay for trips to program events. Although youth were referred for substance abuse interventions, there did not seem to be well-developed relationships with providers of other service providers, such as those offering mental health, tattoo removal, programs that youth might need. Through a grant procured by the DTS, however, youth were beginning to receive personal counseling through a family therapy model.

Early in the project, staff met with representatives of several IT employers in the Cleveland area who promised positions for some youth after they completed training. In the early months of the after-release portion of the project, however, many youth seem uninterested in IT careers and generally were not eligible for such positions in any case. Instead, they were placed mainly in entry-level jobs with grocery stores, fast food restaurants, and similar service-delivery companies.

Staff Recruitment

The project was administered by the director of DTS, which is part of Cuyahoga County's DJA. Day-to-day operations were the responsibility of a senior case manager who served with CCDJA/DTS before the grant was awarded; his background was in business (accounting). The project manager was hired for the YODP. Her education was in criminal justice.

The two correctional facilities each hired an IT instructor for the project. The teachers had worked at their respective schools before the grant was awarded. At Mohican, the teacher was teaching business education when she applied for the position. The YDC teacher once had taught at the facility and was rehired using grant funds.

The EDC firm provided STW training for teachers and administrators at each school, but the training occurred before the IT teacher at YDC was hired. The teacher implemented a curriculum based on what she had read. The two IT teachers were to have collaborated in developing a coordinated curriculum for the project, but they had been able to meet only once because of travel difficulties. One site was three hours south of Cleveland and the other was one hour north of the city. Bringing the two teachers together regularly proved too difficult.

The Mohican teacher was a veteran staff member, and she had visited several youth facilities that had IT training programs. She had been able to establish a program for youth to gain experience with computers, software and some Internet applications, although the facility had no connection to the Internet.

Case managers assigned to serve youth returning from residential confinement were hired using funds other than those from DOL. The LMM and YOU instructors, case managers, and job developers also were hired with funds other than those from DOL grants.

Target Population Recruitment

Youth were recruited into the program by virtue of their assignment to one of the residential facilities. Evidently, youth initially assigned to the aftercare program did not understand that they were to become part of a highly structured training experience. Motivating them to participate proved to be an on-going issue. Even after youth were made aware of their involvement with the project, many reported that they were not interested in participating and thought that they were being punished by being required to attend.

Teachers reported they were concerned about the pattern of service delivery resulting from incarceration and release practices. Youth arrived on a rolling basis at YDC, and they were released on a rolling basis to the community, depending on their behavior, grades, and other factors. Teachers said they never knew for how long they would have a youth in class.

Aftercare classes and services also received youth released on a rolling basis and staff did not know for how long they would have the youth in their care. The effect, despite the effort to design a curriculum either at the residential facility or in the community, was that there was no provision for youth to complete their training once probation was over.

The IT training seemed to be a mismatch for many of these youth. Their academic skills were gauged by one teacher as averaging about the fourth-grade level, so it appeared that IT training for many youth was irrelevant. The staff at YOU depended on assessment specialists to get youth to

attend the program that had been designed for them. In general, the youth disliked the trips to downtown Cleveland and the continuous drug monitoring. Youth said they were told that they would be eligible for jobs providing wages of $8.55/hour with the training they received, but they found that they did not qualify for jobs that paid that much.

Youth often did not attend classes. Meanwhile, trainers grew impatient because there were other youth in the community seeking slots. Assessment specialists, however, wanted the trainers to keep the slots open for YODP youth as they attempted to re-engage them in training. Staff reported that many parents also offered no help in keeping their children engaged with the program.

Staff at CCDJA believed, however, that the youth needed the IT skills to survive in high school as well as in the job market. It appeared that the youth were making progress in using the computer for word processing, spreadsheets, and some desktop publishing tasks. With the overwhelming majority of project youth under the age of 18, it was hard, however, to judge the long-term employability of these youth based on their level of computer skills in spring 2001.

What youth generally wanted were jobs, and they tended to find them on their own. Once they were off probation or had completed requirements for a high school diploma, they no longer returned to the training program. Some also were concerned that subsidized jobs the project helped them get would be cut off after probation. There was no assurance additional grant funds could be found to continue youth subsidies.

Technical Assistance

The project's education and training staff attended the September 1999 and the February 2000 technical assistance conferences sponsored by DOL. The staff also participated in two conference calls for Category II site leaders held in 2000 and in early 2001. These calls allowed DOL, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the Department of Justice (DOJ), and site leaders to share what they knew and to address challenges in a collegial setting.

The project's leadership also received semi-weekly telephone or e-mail inquiries from the technical assistance team at Research and Evaluation Associates. Based on issues that surfaced during telephone conferences, a special Category II workshop was scheduled for March 2000 in Lakeland, Florida. The workshop focused on issues involving data files, entrepreneurship, and aftercare. The workshop included a visit to the Avon Park Youth Academy, another Category II project site, and to the offices of STREET Smart, the organization responsible for the aftercare component.

Technical assistance events for the Ohio project included these:

- In August 1999, a site visit was made by a Research and Evaluation Associates technical assistance specialist to the Mohican and YDC facilities for needs assessment, to meet all the staff, and to gather baseline data.

- In May 2000, Ms. Doris Humphrey facilitated a workshop on implementing a School-to-Work System at both the Mohican and the YDC facilities.

- In October 2000, Dr. Troy Armstrong gave a workshop on the Intensive Aftercare Program Model to all the YODP leadership in Cuyahoga County.

- Dr. Armstrong returned to the project with two colleagues in spring 2001 to provide training on the integrated case management model, reducing the disproportionate minority confinement of youth, and on gender-based programming for female youth offenders.

Before each TA events, extensive conversations were held with the project's leadership and TA consultants, so that the workshops were tailored to the specific considerations of the project.

Sustainability

Ohio's demonstration project served as the catalyst for a major restructuring of the Department of Treatment Services and the beginning of a major restructuring of the relationship between the two correctional facilities and the home aftercare programs. Project staff members were confident that county and city WIA funds would continue to support the expanded services to youthful offenders put in place during the demonstration. They also believed that foundations would continue to support supplementary services provided youth through the project.

Other elements of the Ohio project also benefited from the project and, it appears, will continue after YODP funding ends. More specifically:

- IT classes should continue to be taught because of the funding that was provided to initiate them.

- The aftercare portion of the project was being amplified and will be sustained through a combination of WIA and foundation grant funds.

It should be noted, however, that the STW curriculum specified by DOL for Category II projects was not implemented and that project staff saw no need for it. Instead, the staff focused mainly on the aftercare portion of the Category II model. Perhaps this was because project staff were not in a position to affect school policy. If a STW system is ever implemented, it might be best for the project staff to consider training youth for occupations that would better engage their energy and attention.

Section IV

CATEGORY III - COMMUNITY-WIDE COORDINATION PROJECTS

Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) grantees in six medium-sized cities were awarded about $300,000 each to focus on high poverty and high-crime communities. The design for the two-year project was for grantees to work with youth service providers to develop linkages that would strengthen the coordination of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders. More specifically, Category III grantees were tasked to consider ways to:

(1) build upon existing employment and training, recreation, conflict resolution, and other youth crime and gang prevention programs;

(2) establish alternative sentencing and community service options for youth offenders, especially those who have been gang members; and

(3) establish or continue gang suppression activities.

The Statement of Work issued for Category III projects by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) required grantees to design their projects in ways that would:

- enhance existing education, training and employment services within their communities for youths who were either in-school or out-of-school;
- establish linkages and partnerships with other service providers to develop a seamless system of services that addressed the needs of the targeted youth population;
- reduce school dropout, gang involvement, drug and alcohol sales and abuse, teenage pregnancy, and other activities that lead to criminal behavior;
- increase the number of youth entering full-time permanent employment, completing high school, entering institutions of higher learning, completing training, returning to school, or entering alternative learning facilities;
- establish linkages with the local school system, law enforcement, social services agencies, community based organizations, the Workforce Investment Act system and other services for youth;

- include local community residents, parents, youth, local police, parole system, guardians, businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, etc. in the development of decision-making involving the initiative;
- expand existing program services and initiate new employment, training, education, and support services;
- use the Federal Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to facilitate employment for project participants;
- maintain a quality staff;
- develop with partners and community members a well-conceived implementation plan with emphasis on development of a system that addresses the needs of the targeted youth population; and
- provide core services in a facility that was clean, attractive, well lighted, fully equipped, ventilated, with easy access for clients, and large enough to accommodate some staff from some partnerships and most of the project's core activities with a welcoming atmosphere.

Section Organization

To assess the ability of grantees to address these requirements, evaluators made three visits to each of the six Category III projects. (See Table 3, page 7.) The findings in this section consider nine areas of interest based upon the visits:

- Planning the Project;
- Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships;
- Organizational Issues;
- Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities;
- Collateral Services;
- Staff Recruitment;
- Target Population Recruitment;

- Technical Assistance; and
- Sustainability.

Reports for each Category III project, which consider the areas of interest more fully, can be found in Appendix E.

FINDINGS

Planning the Project

Evaluation site visits for the six Category III projects found that planning for the projects by grantees was adequate. In formulating their plans for the demonstration projects, evidence suggests that project planners designed their projects to accomplish the goals specified for Category III projects and to meet requirements set forth in the DOL Statement of Work.

Table 13 indicates planning responsibilities initiated for the six projects. Four of the projects involved two or more agencies in the planning phase. All of the projects included both public and private agencies and organizations as collaborating or supporting partners, although the level of involvement varied among projects. It should be noted that participation of youth in the planning for the demonstrations also varied among the six Category III projects. In all, youth and their parents were asked to participate at only two project sites — Bakersfield and Rockford.

It was difficult to say with certainty, however, how important youth and parental involvement in youth-oriented projects had been as a contributing factor in the success of the projects. The project in Rockford, which involved youth in the planning, was strong primarily because it was well established while the project in Bakersfield, which also included youth in the planning phase, struggled. Toward the end of the demonstration period several projects began to include youth on their advisory boards, perhaps because of WIA requirements that emphasized training of youth and mandated that local Workforce Investment Boards form youth councils.

Program managers in Knoxville, Pensacola, and Rockford also served as members on youth councils in their areas and were able to capitalize on their involvement. Both Knoxville and Rockford received funds through local Workforce Investment Boards. Rockford's program manager also served as a member of the state youth council.

Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships

To a large extent, and with only minor exceptions, the six Category III projects followed the original project designs they outlined in their applications for the demonstration grants. They also attempted to establish important linkages in support of project goals. All projects were to build upon existing

Table 13. Planning for YODP Grants, Category III Projects

Target Site	Bakersfield, California	Clifton, New Jersey	Knoxville, Tennessee	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Pensacola, Florida	Rockford, Illinois
Project Name	Youth Goals	Job Ready	Project NOVA	Fresh Start	Building Success	YouthBuild
Lead Partner(s)	Employers Training Resource (ETR)	1. Workforce Development Center 2. Passaic Vicinage Probation Division	1. Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) 2. Metropolitan Drug Court (MDC) 3. Knoxville Community Development Corp (KCDC) 4. District Attorney	Minneapolis Metropolitan Employment and Training Program (METP)	1. Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB) 2. Office of Juvenile Studies, University of West Florida (OJS)	1. Rock River Training Corporation 2. YouthBuild Rockford
Managing Agency	ETR	Passaic Vicinage Probation Div.	KCDC	Employment Action Center	OJS	YouthBuild Rockford

systems, which included both core and collateral services provided youth. Some existing systems, however, were more developed than others and, as a result, were able to progress more quickly toward meeting their objectives and goals.

Strong systems, including well-established partnerships, already were in place in Minneapolis, Knoxville, and Rockford. Implementing the projects in these locations required only the addition of workers to supplement much of the work already being done through collaborative networks.

Systems in Bakersfield, Clifton, and Pensacola, however, were less fully developed. This situation caused the projects to struggle to gain and maintain momentum from the beginning. As a result, the lead agencies of these three projects found it difficult, in varying degrees, to recruit both partners and clients.

Schools as Partners

Recruiting schools as partners posed a special problem for project officials in Pensacola, apparently because of the school system's policies on removing disruptive students. Likewise, the Minneapolis and Knoxville projects, for political and other various reasons, struggled to establish formal partnerships with the traditional school system. Project officials in Clifton, however, developed close ties with public schools, although the project discontinued its partnership with the Paterson Adult School in July 2000 when two teachers who had been hired for the project left.

There were some encouraging signs by spring 2001, however. Pensacola had moved aggressively toward establishing a partnership with a charter school in its target area. The project planned to supply a full-time vocational education teacher to the school to help about 20 students learn the construction trades. In Minneapolis, the project was in the process of establishing a partnership with at least one high school. As a result, some students were funneled into Fresh Start. And in Knoxville, Project NOVA had received an $80,000 grant through the local Workforce Investment Board to collaborate with local schools, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the University of Tennessee. The project also sought to identify and provide services through the four partners to about 350 needy youth.

Also, by spring 2001 the Bakersfield project had refocused its efforts that included both providing services to youth while also creating and strengthening partnerships with service providers that had expertise in meeting the needs of youth. As a result, Youth GOALS was working more closely with established agencies to provide youth job referral services, GED training, and mental health services.

Working with the Juvenile Justice System

Several projects successfully worked with juvenile justice systems in their areas to recruit clients. Referrals to the projects frequently were made by judges and probation officers. Of the six Category III projects, these projects were more directly involved with the juvenile justice system:

- In Pensacola, the project's lead agency also was responsible for a medium-security confinement facility for youth. The design of the project was to expose youths in the facility to the Building Success project in hopes that they would enroll in the project when they were released from confinement. At the time of the third evaluation site visit in May 2001, however, only a few youth had participated after their release.

- In Minneapolis, project officials worked to build a partnership with the local medium-confinement facility, which they considered an important possible source of clients. Referrals also came from the city's truancy team, diversion programs, juvenile and drug courts, and alternative schools.

- In Clifton, project officials also were probation officers who fed clients into the project.

- In Knoxville, project officials once served as the Truancy Center staff, before responsibility for running the Truancy Center was reassigned to the police department. As a result, the project benefited from its well-established relationship with officers who ran the Truancy Center. And, project case managers continued to have access to vulnerable youth. Youth picked up for truancy were assessed by the Truancy Center and, if appropriate, were funneled into the project.

Recruiting Employers

The six projects encountered several barriers involving partners that hampered their ability to serve the targeted youth. Many employers in most locations, for example, appeared unwilling to hire youth who had criminal records or lacked skills and education. Other employers considered project participants only for low-paying and menial jobs, justifying their unwillingness on their low educational attainment and low-skill levels. Staff at several projects also reported that employers generally misunderstood the workings and requirements of the Federal Bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credit programs. Many employers, for example, incorrectly believed the programs required large amounts of paperwork.

Perhaps the most promising, and potentially long-term, job prospects for project participants were at those projects that directly offered project clients vocational training, especially in the construction trades or other specialized areas. The skills that were taught generally were in high-demand and paid relatively good wages, compared to those found in service industries, such as at fast-food restaurants.

Especially worth noting were efforts in Rockford, which offered training in building houses and manufacturing, and in Pensacola, which also partnered with Habitat for Humanity to provide project participants training in home construction. Rockford hoped to expand its efforts in the fall of 2001 by offering clients a computer technology track that would teach them how to repair computers. Pensacola also planned to add a full-time vocational education teacher to teach construction skills to about 20 students at a charter school in the project's target area.

Providing Services to Clients

To a large extent, the lead agencies of the six projects served as the primary coordinators and managers while also providing some basic services to clients. Their coordination responsibilities generally included recruiting employers and other partners that provided various basic training, educational, and collateral services to project clients. Evaluators visiting the demonstration projects generally found that the efforts by all the lead agencies fulfilled their coordination responsibilities as specified by the DOL Statement of Work.

The cities where the six projects operated generally also had many similar programs aimed at youth, both former offenders or those who were at risk of becoming court involved. In theory, programs that work together, and despite redundancies in their services, often create a synergy that magnifies and intensifies a community's attempts to serve youth. When possible, the demonstration projects attempted to take advantage of existing programs and services to supplement their efforts. In Knoxville, for example, churches and other agencies were active in the target areas and offered youth diversionary and aftercare programs. Minneapolis also had an array of available programs aimed at youth. The YMCA offered memberships to clients of the Bakersfield and Rockford projects. It appeared that the communities offering the least number of youth-oriented programs and services were Pensacola and Clifton.

Table 14 (page 62) outlines the division of responsibilities among partners at the six projects. The lead partner at all six projects was responsible for intake and assessment, case management, soft skills training, job search support, job placement, and post-placement follow-up. Other services, including academic and collateral services (barrier removal such as tattoo removal), generally were provided by other partners or agencies. Both Rockford and Pensacola projects provided vocational training.

Organizational Issues

The importance of strong, clear, and consistent leadership from a central organization, as well as willingness to share it with partners, cannot be dismissed. These elements give direction and coherence to projects and programs. In general, the six Category III projects offered such leadership, although some experienced difficulties in building momentum and then sustaining it.

Table 14. Service Providers in Category III Projects

Service	Bakersfield, California	Clifton, New Jersey	Knoxville, Tennessee	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Pensacola, Florida	Rockford, Illinois
Intake and Assessment	ETR	Probation Division	Project NOVA	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
Case Management	ETR	Probation Division	Project NOVA	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
Diploma or GED Help	Other Agencies, Schools	Other Agencies, Schools	WIB, Pellissippi State	EAC	Other Agencies, Schools	Other Agencies
Soft and Life Skills Training	ETR	Probation Division	WIB, Pellissippi State	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
Barrier Removal	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies
Vocational Education	Other Agencies, Schools	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	OJS	YouthBuild
Job Search Support	ETR	Probation Division	Project NOVA, WIB	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
Job Placement Support	ETR	Probation Division	Project NOVA, WIB	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
Post-placement follow-up	ETR	Probation Division	Project NOVA	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
Substance Abuse and Person Counseling	Other Agencies	Probation Division, Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	YouthBuild and Other Agencies

It appeared, however, that success of the six projects depended less upon the nature of leadership than the particularities of place and circumstance. One critical factor, for example, was whether the organization running the project was well established in the community. (This is discussed further in the Lessons Learned chapter.)

One other aspect that influenced the success of the projects' ability to deliver benefits to clients concerned location of project facilities. Ideally, facilities are convenient and accessible to clients. The locations of five Category III projects, to a large degree, were conducive to the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. These were Bakersfield, Clifton, Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford, which were in close proximity to the target populations. The projects were either within or on the fringe of targeted neighborhoods and provided participants easy access to project services.

The location of the Pensacola facility, however, was the exception. It was on the suburban campus of the University of West Florida about 10 miles from the target population. This posed a major barrier to recruitment of youth. Many project participants found it difficult to find transportation to the facility. The problem persisted until student caseworkers volunteered to drive clients to and from training.

There were, however, some advantages to having the project situated on the UWF campus. The campus was considered "gang neutral" territory and it had a well-equipped wood working facility for clients to use. It appeared, nonetheless, that location hindered the Pensacola project as it sought to serve 45 clients a year. This situation was about to change in the spring of 2001 as the project worked to establish a partnership with a charter school in its target area.

As specified in the Statement of Work, the projects generally were operated in facilities that were clean, attractive, well lighted, fully equipped, ventilated, and provided participants easy access. They also adequately accommodated staff and some partners as well as core program activities. And, they generally presented a welcoming atmosphere to youth.

Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities

The most successful models for building competencies to prepare youth for life, worthwhile work, and transition into careers are those that have the proper mixture of several key elements. These components include:

- community-wide collaboration;
- employment and training programs;
- alternative sentencing and community service programs; and
- anti-gang initiatives.

In general, evaluators found that the efforts of the six Category III projects made important strides toward creating significant and effective amalgams of these components. As a result, the six projects helped improve the lives of the youth they reached and served in their communities.

Community-wide Collaborations

Some projects were uncertain about whether their efforts should focus more on building partnerships and linkages or helping place clients into jobs. In general, all projects initially believed that their projects would be evaluated primarily on their ability to find jobs for clients. This misunderstanding changed somewhat as the projects progressed and became better educated and more oriented toward the demonstration project's objectives and goals involving partnerships.

Evaluators found that those projects that emphasized job placement, or delivery of services, at the expense of the more important task of building and enhancing partnerships were generally less successful than those that attempted to balance these efforts. Projects that had difficulties were Bakersfield, Clifton, and Pensacola. By spring 2001, however, Bakersfield had taken steps to balance its approach to include both providing services to clients and establishing strong partnerships with other agencies and organizations. Also, Pensacola had refocused its efforts toward establishing a partnership with a charter school and to more fully integrate its project into its aftercare program. The change should help the Pensacola project improve recruitment.

Employment and Training Programs

In addition to building and enhancing partnerships, the six Category III projects also provided some basic services to clients as a way to better prepare them for continued education, jobs, and careers. More specifically, the services that were provided sought to increase the number of youth entering full-time permanent employment, completing high school, entering institutions of higher learning, completing training, returning to school, entering alternative learning facilities. It appeared that for the most part the services that the projects provided clients were adequate to help them develop skills, knowledge, and competencies.

In general, the services provided directly by the agencies running Category III projects were designed to prepare youth for several skills. The services were intended to help them:

- prepare for increased personal or job responsibility;
- interact better and become involved in their community;
- develop support systems that included families, peers, schools, and employers;
- develop new resources; and

- assist them in developing their abilities to lead happy and productive lives.

To reach these goals, each of the six projects provided clients:

- assessment, classification services;
- individual case management that incorporated family and community perspectives; and
- links to social and employment networks and resources.

All of the projects generally offered clients intake and assessment, case management, job search support, job placement support, and post-placement follow-up. With the exception of Knoxville, all of the projects directly offered clients pre-vocational skills and life-skills training. Both Rockford and Pensacola also offered vocational training programs to clients. In general, clients needing specialized help, such as drug or alcohol counseling or tattoo removal, were referred to partners or other agencies providing these services.

Case workers at all projects spent a large amount of their time attempting to help qualified clients find appropriate employment. They noted serious, and what they considered unanticipated, problems in doing this. These problems included the lack of skills, poor attitude, lack of motivation, and lack of educational attainment among many project clients. The distance to good paying jobs, which increasingly were found outside inner-cities and in the more-distant suburbs, also dissuaded many project clients from seeking work, the case workers pointed out.

Placing clients in jobs indeed proved difficult for all six projects. Although the economies of the areas where the projects were situated were generally good throughout the course of the demonstration, many good-paying jobs required well-educated and skilled workers. Many project clients, however, were unskilled youth. In addition, in Minneapolis many clients were recent immigrants who had not yet developed adequate English-language skills.

A challenge for all projects was to find effective ways to provide remedial writing and mathematics skills training to help youth become more employable. In Pensacola, for example, helping targeted youth become employable proved a monumental problem for both the project and other agencies. Many youth who had been released from confinement had only third-grade skills and were reported to need special education classes.

A key problem at the Pensacola project was what to do with those clients under 18 who rejected formal schooling and had low aptitudes, but were prohibited or discouraged from seeking employment. Officials estimated that 35 to 45 percent of youth involved in the juvenile justice system there faced these problems. A strategy that emerged late in the project combined vocational and academic training at a charter school in the project's target area.

Alternative Sentencing and Community Service Programs

The demonstration projects served as alternative sentencing or community service programs in varying degrees. The Knoxville program, for example, received from juvenile courts a large number of youth who entered Project NOVA to complete their GEDs as an alternative to lock-up. The project, however, worked with the courts to first decide which youth were suitable for the project. Some youth also were referred to the project to perform community service.

In Minneapolis, the project increasingly became one of the city's diversion programs. As a result, the project by the spring of 2001 received about 72 percent of its clients from juvenile and drug courts. Case workers there believed that the power of the courts gave them more clout to require clients to attend training.

The Building Success program in Pensacola operated two tracks. One track was for youth from its aftercare program and the other was for youth serving at the Blackwater confinement facility. The two groups were segregated, however, and not allowed to interact. At one time, juvenile judges were ordering youth to Building Success, but only a few had arrived in 2001. Several times probation officers also referred youth to the project who violated their probation. Youth in the program had the opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity as community service.

Clifton's project had the goal of providing services for up to 300 youth on probation. Probation officers funneled clients to the project where they also could perform community service. Rockford targeted only youth who were at risk of criminal involvement and required potential trainees to apply for the program. The project also required trainees to perform weekly service projects in the community. And, in Bakersfield the project took probation and court-ordered youth as well as youth who were at risk of court involvement.

Anti-gang Initiatives

A major requirement for YODP grantees was to establish or continue gang suppression activities. The reluctance of youth to identify themselves as gang members, combined with strong anti-gang efforts in some cities that had driven gang activity underground, made this difficult to do. This especially was the case in Pensacola, Knoxville, and Minneapolis. As a result, this was an aspect of the project that was not fully developed. Several projects, however, pointed out that the services they offered served as important anti-gang efforts by keeping youth engaged in constructive activities.

Gang activity, nonetheless, affected many of the projects significantly. In Bakersfield, for example, the high level of gang activity in the target area affected project outcomes because some youth were unwilling to travel to a project facility that was situated in a rival's territory. To counter this effect, case workers attempted to meet students in relatively safe spaces, such as in schools, where they provided counseling and other services. The threat of gang violence also affected a client's access

to public transportation in neighborhoods where many youth lived. Both Pensacola and Minneapolis projects, however, operated in parts of the city that were generally gang neutral.

Project Outcomes

Table 15 (page 68) presents an overview of outcomes resulting from the efforts of the six projects. It should be noted that a complete assessment of the outcomes was not possible. A lack of a uniform reporting system, which was not a requirement of the grant, made it difficult for evaluators to piece together an accurate count of dispositions/outcomes. The data reported in the table represents a compilation of information provided by each project as well as data collected by evaluators during their site visits and from other reports.

It also should be noted that only one project, Knoxville, extensively targeted the Job Corps as a possible source of training for clients. In all, 24 of Project NOVA's clients had joined the Job Corps by July 2001. Projects that primarily received clients through the justice system — Pensacola, Minneapolis, and Clifton — had not focused either on the military or on Job Corps as sources of training because the organizations placed restrictions on offenders. The armed services, in general, reject youth who lack a high school diploma. They also severely restrict enlistment of those with GEDs or who have criminal records.

Collateral Services

In the case of Category III projects, collateral services are services for clients other than soft skills, pre-employment, basic, vocational, and educational training. These services, for example, included tattoo removal, help in finding adequate work clothes, and counseling for personal and family problems. In general, the six Category III projects were not equipped to provide collateral services and chose instead to refer clients who needed them to other more-specialized agencies.

There were some exceptions, however. YouthBuild in Rockford and the Probation Division, which runs the project in Clifton, offered substance abuse and personal counseling to clients. And, almost universally, caseworkers used their personal transportation and personal time to help clients obtain driver's licenses, birth certificates as well as to attend training sessions and job interviews.

Staff Recruitment

The level, intensity, and quality of services offered clients in support of employment and training programs depended greatly upon the capabilities, experience, and enthusiasm of staff members. Therefore, it was important for the projects to recruit staff members who were both knowledgeable, energetic, and enthusiastic about their work. In general, evaluators found that the staff members of all six projects met these standards. The evaluators also noted that quite often the staff members went above and beyond the call, spending their own time helping clients with personal problems, obtaining vital documents, and driving them to and from training and job interviews.

Table 15. Status of Clients, Category III Projects

Outcomes	Bakersfield, California (7/23/01)	Clifton, New Jersey (8/24/01)	Knoxville, Tennessee (6/30/01)	Minneapolis, Minnesota (7/24/01)	Pensacola, Florida (6/30/01)	Rockford, Illinois (8/21/01)
Enrollment Goal	None set	300	None set	None set	45	90
Total Enrollment	427	198	207	151	40	88
Dispositions						
Unsubsidized employment	51	25	74	59	22	35
Joined the military	0	0	3	0	0	0
Dropped for non-participation	0	NR	0	22	12	NR
Returned/remained in school	4	24	115	2	22	1
Entered college	7	1	6	0	0	5
Completed education	NR	10	19	3	4	24
Incarceration	77	18	11	12	6	2
Joined Job Corps	0	3	24	0	0	0
Moved	NR	3	9	Unk	Unk	8
Enrollment in Pre-employment and Educational Training	NR	121	40	151	3	3
Enrollment in GED/Other Academic Education	NR	5	12	36 est.	5	65
Referred for other services	124/mo.	21	104	87	26	51
In process of being assessed	0	NR	21	NR	NR	0
Receiving follow-up services	90/mo	183	186	59	19	88

NR: Not Reported

Evaluators identified several patterns concerning the recruitment of staff members by the six projects. These included, in general:

- Grantees used YODP funds to add staff to existing organizational structures. Doing this ensured continuity within the organizations and that pay and responsibilities were commensurate with other workers holding similar positions. Most of the projects added either one or two full-time positions for the demonstration project.

- The projects' recruitment processes were often affected by local labor market conditions. In some instances, for example, the low unemployment rate made it difficult to hire highly qualified personnel for the projects. One project position in Pensacola was discontinued after project officials were unable to fill it. The Bakersfield project as well had difficulties filling a counselor's position. Several other projects were forced to hire relatively inexperienced, but usually committed, younger workers.

- Older, experienced staff members working with well-established organizations that dealt with youths appeared to have less turnover and to be more effective in dealing with clients. The Knoxville staff served as an example of how experience, knowledge, and continuity among a staff can enhance a project's effectiveness.

- Project coordinators at all projects were seasoned and experienced.

- Staff turnover appeared to be a distraction for several projects. In Minneapolis the project coordinator left after a year as did the project coordinator in Pensacola. Key members in Clifton, Bakersfield, and Knoxville also resigned and required replacement.

Target Population Recruitment

Each project targeted clients differently and received them from a variety of sources. The juvenile justice system served as a primary provider of clients in Bakersfield, Clifton, Minneapolis, and Pensacola. Both Knoxville and Rockford, however, focused primarily on recruiting youth who were at risk of court involvement. In Knoxville, a large number of clients came through the Truancy Center while clients in Rockford were recruited by distributing flyers door-to-door and by word of mouth in the project's target neighborhoods.

Evaluators found that projects dealt primarily with younger youth who were under 18. These were, for example, Bakersfield (75%), Pensacola (78%), and Minneapolis (60%). They also found that project officials often had to compete with other youth-oriented programs for clients. Probation officers who had power over clients often weighed the advantages of assigning youth to the demonstration projects instead of to other programs that provided similar services. This especially was the case in Minneapolis where there were many similar programs that targeted youth.

Table 16 (page 71) presents a general, although incomplete, demographic portrayal of Category III clients. A uniform reporting system was not in place to provide sufficient data for analysis. Therefore, it was impractical in this report to discuss whether clients who sought project services were more likely to experience positive outcomes than those who were referred to the project through the juvenile justice system or who participated reluctantly.

Anecdotal evidence collected from project counselors who served with some projects (Knoxville and Minneapolis), however, suggested that youth who volunteered for the projects were somewhat more eager to attend training and seek employment. It also should be noted that the data in the table were collected both by evaluators during their site visits and from information that the projects reported to the technical assistance team at Research and Evaluation Associates.

Technical Assistance

In accordance with its contract with DOL, Research and Evaluation Associates was not initially authorized to conduct more than an initial visit to Category III projects. Subsequently, authorization was given for an additional technical assistance site visit to each Category III project. During the course of the demonstration, Category III projects did receive technical assistance during two conferences that were held in Washington, DC, and Tampa, Florida. Research and Evaluation Associates also held scheduled bi-weekly telephone conversations with the projects. Technical assistance also was provided via telephone and e-mail when projects requested it. In addition, the team collaborated with the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) to arrange for specialized technical assistance that was delivered by NYEC consultants. The consultants facilitated on-site sessions for Bakersfield, Clifton, and Rockford projects. (The Final Report on Technical Assistance provides more information.)

Table 17 (page 72) shows dates and services provided to projects by the Research and Evaluation Technical Assistance Team.

Sustainability

The possibility that the projects would be unable to obtain funds to continue their operations after demonstration grant funding created anxiety among staffs at several Category III projects. Even the projects that appeared to be the most secure and had the greatest chances of being sustained expressed this. In the case of Knoxville, for example, the program manager at one point was uncertain whether to continue accepting clients into the project because he feared funding would end when clients were in the middle of training. In Clifton, funds for the project's educational component ran out and the project ceased providing that service.

In general, the anxiety expressed by the projects was understandable. Accepting funds may prove beneficial in the short run, but in the long run may place what has become a worthwhile service in a precarious position. In short, it was difficult for projects to fully come to grips with the fact that

Table 16. Demographics of YODP Participants, Category III Projects

Demographic Information	Bakersfield, California (07/23/01)	Clifton, New Jersey (6/30/01)	Knoxville, Tennessee (10/3/00)	Minneapolis, Minnesota (7/24/01)	Pensacola, Florida (6/30/01)	Rockford, Illinois (8/21/01)
Number enrolled	427	198	207	151	40	88
Gender						
Males	57% (298)	82% (163)	69% (121)	73% (111)	93% (37)	72% (63)
Females	43% (129)	18% (35)	31% (54)	27% (40)	7% (3)	28% (25)
Race						
White	23% (80)	.01% (3)	66% (116)	17% (26)	53% (21)	14% (12)
Black	22% (78)	70% (139)	31% (54)	70% (106)	40% (16)	81% (71)
Hispanic	49% (174)	27% (52)	.5% (1)	.1% (1)	.5% (2)	6% (5)
Native American	0	0	.5% (1)	.6% (9)	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	.5% (7)	0	0
Biracial/ Other	6% (20)	.01% (2)	2% (3)	.1% (2)	.3% (1)	0
Unk		.01% (2)				
Ages						
13 to 17 years old	75% (316)*	17% (35)	41% (71)	60% (90)	78% (31)	22% (19)
18 to 25 years old	20% (82)**	82% (163)	59% (104)	40% (61)	23% (9)	78% (69)
Unknown	5% (29)					
H.S. Dropouts	NR	88% (175)	52% (91)	45% (68)	NR	86% (76)
Offenders	49% (204)	100% (198)	68% (119)	72% (108)	100% (40)	44% (39)
Gang Affiliated	6% (25)	NR	NR	NR	NR	Unk

(Client numbers are reported in parentheses)
NR: Not Reported
* Clients were between 14 and 19 years old
** Clients were between 19 and 24 years old

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Table 17. Technical Assistance Provided to Category III Sites

Bakersfield, California	Clifton, New Jersey	Knoxville, Tennessee	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Pensacola, Florida	Rockford, Illinois
8/1999 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/1999 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/1999 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/1999 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/1999 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/1999 Needs Assessment by TA team
8/2000 TA workshop Topics: Team building; maintaining partnerships; engaging community; engaging hard to serve youth; engaging parents	10/2000 TA workshop Topics: Building community partnerships; job development; engaging employers; relationship management	9/2000 Bi-level case management workshop Topics: Bi-level case management approach; perspectives for front-line service providers; assessment planning and client capacity building; delivering a dynamic case management program	2/2000 Two staff members participated NYEC training in Baltimore, MD. Topics: Engaging employers, establishing business opportunities	2/2000 Two staff members participated NYEC training in Baltimore, MD. Topics: Engaging employers, establishing business opportunities	3/2000 Bi-level Case Management workshop Topics: Bi-level case management approach; perspectives for front-line service providers; assessment planning and client capacity building; delivering a dynamic case management program
					8/2000 NYEC sponsored Nick Briggs from Gulf Trades Center to provide TA on Case Management

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the YODP was a pilot project, an experiment so to speak, that was designed to provide lessons, rather than serve as the core of a new full-fledged program.

Further confusing the matter was the stated goal that projects should seek ways to sustain the services once the pilot ended. There was no easy solution to this situation, perhaps other than educating the projects early on about how to find ways to seek out future funding streams and the importance of building strong links and partnerships.

By June 2001, DOL had announced that it would provide additional funds to four of the six Category III projects so that they could continue operations for another year. The projects were Bakersfield, Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford. Although it was not refunded, Pensacola requested and received a one-year no-cost extension, which would allow it to continue operations through the summer of 2002. In the end, sustaining the project after grant funding ended posed a significant problem only for Clifton.

Plans for sustaining the projects varied among the six Category III projects at the time of the third evaluation site visit. These were the thoughts of project officials in the spring of 2001 about the prospects for continuing the project after the demonstration grant funds ended:

- **Bakersfield:** Project officials attempted to build contacts with various agencies to ensure continuation of the project. Although there were no other funding streams to ensure continuation of the project, project officials were searching for additional funding sources, including through local Workforce Investment Boards.

- **Clifton:** Project officials were not optimistic about continuation of the project. By summer 2000, the project had severed its ties with the Adult School. A year later, it had just begun making connections with the Workforce Development Center for possible additional funds. Funding constraints and other pressing matters, especially the attrition of probation officers, had placed project continuation low on the priority list.

- **Knoxville:** Continuation of the project after grant funds ended was not a problem. The project staff was part of a large well-funded community agency. Project staff had secured additional grants through the local Workforce Investment Board, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, and other sources that would allow the project to continue.

- **Minneapolis:** Sustainability was not a problem, primarily because the project's lead agency was part of a large well-established non-profit organization that offered many different youth services throughout the city. The project had been integrated into the existing organizational framework. Continuation of the project required only a minimal amount of additional financial support. The project's parent organization was working with the city's government to secure additional funds, including those offered through local Workforce Investment Boards.

- **Pensacola:** University of West Florida officials were committed to binding the Building Success project with its Advanced Aftercare program and the Blackwater confinement facility after grant funds ended. Officials anticipated that the university would receive additional funds through other grants to support the project.

- **Rockford:** YouthBuild, a well-established and successful program, was certain that it would adapt components of the demonstration project after grant funds ended. YouthBuild receives about $5 million annually from grants and in-kind support.

SUMMARY

At the end of the two-year demonstration project, most of the Category III projects were well poised to build on what they had accomplished and to continue into the future. All of the projects had assembled capable and hard working staffs and had developed generally workable and efficient systems for delivering basic services to clients. And, to a large extent, the projects had met the DOL goal of enhancing existing education, training, and employment services offered in their communities.

The projects that received additional demonstration funds or no-cost extensions also had another year to improve on what they were doing. Their new task was to create additional partnerships, to develop further those that already existed, and to refine their organizational, operating, and feedback systems that they had installed as a result of the grant program. It appeared that if they took these tasks to heart, they would be able to serve and help an even larger number of youth while moving their projects forward toward sustainability.

The staffs of the six Category III projects should take pride in knowing that their efforts during the past two years — both those that were successful and unsuccessful — have made significant contributions to the development of more effective ways to lead troubled youth toward worthwhile lives, productive work, and long-term careers. That was no small accomplishment.

Section V

LESSONS LEARNED

The Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) was still evolving when this report was written. Seven of the 12 projects evaluated by Research and Evaluation Associates over the past two years had been refunded to continue operations for another year. With the exception of Clifton, New Jersey, the other five projects, which did not receive new funds, had received no-cost extensions to continue through the summer of 2002. (It should be noted that the Clifton project had expended its funds fully by the end of the grant period and, therefore, was ineligible for an extension.)

Only when the projects have ended and enough time has passed to examine their long-term outcomes will it be possible to state more explicitly and confidently what lessons actually were learned from the demonstration projects. Attempts to assess results too soon would be simplistic and, perhaps, counterproductive.

It is possible at this time, nonetheless, to tentatively identify and discuss several factors that *appear* to have contributed to the success of the projects. It also is possible to consider several barriers that *appear* to have hindered the projects to work effectively. It is important to keep in mind, however, that gains in several projects occurred by learning from efforts that sometimes were unsuccessful. For the time being then, the focus of the Lessons Learned section of the report will have to remain on promising practices that hold potential for similar future projects.

This section consists of three parts:

- The first part discusses nine components that Research and Evaluation Associates used to gauge the progress the demonstration projects were making toward meeting their objectives and goals.
- The second part discusses how contextual aspects affected implementation of the various demonstration projects.
- The third part offers a summary and brief discussion of how the demonstration project has served to further organizational learning.

Public Management Model

During the demonstration effort, as a result of learning from the project sites and analysis by Research and Evaluation Associates and DOL, a structured organizational model of public management was developed. The model identified nine components that helped gauge the effort and progress the demonstration projects were making toward meeting their objectives and goals. The

model was based on both qualitative and quantitative data the evaluation and technical assistance teams collected during interviews, site visits, telephone calls, and from reports the projects produced.

The nine components formed the basis for DOL's early footprint for effective practices for a second round of demonstration projects that started on July 1, 2001. The model appears below in Table 18. A short discussion of each indicator then follows.

Table 18. Public Management Model

Indicator of Success	Criteria for Gauging Progress Toward Goal
1. Developed a Well-conceived Plan	• Program has a clear and focused vision and mission. • Program goals and objectives are realistic and measurable. • Stakeholders, including community partners, family member representatives, and front-line staff are involved during program development and implementation.
2. Established Partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System	• Grantee is experienced in working with the Juvenile Justice System.
3. Collected and Maintained Data	• A system for collecting and reporting program information is available and utilized.
4. Developed Community Support/ Network	• Program is supported by youth and family serving agencies including CBOs, faith-based organizations, and public service agencies.
5. Grantee Was Involved	• Grantee is the lead agency, actively providing direction and coordination for the project. • Grantee involvement and support is continuous.
6. Connected to Workforce Development and Juvenile Justice Systems	• Grantee coordinates with and utilizes resources available through the Workforce Development, Juvenile Justice, and Health Care Systems.
7. Leveraged Resources Through Collaboration and Partnerships	• Project effectively identifies and utilizes other resources and funding streams to support project goals.
8. Continuous Improvement System	• Project conducts self-assessment and actively seeks and accepts available technical assistance.
9. Shared Leadership and Information Sharing	• Decision making and information is shared with stakeholders.

1. Well-conceived Plan

Projects that have well-conceived plans are more likely to succeed. More specifically, demonstrations must:

- have a clear and focused vision and mission;
- have realistic and measurable objectives and goals; and
- involve stakeholders, including community partners and front-line staff, in program development and implementation.

In general, well-conceived action — or implementation — plans require involvement of various stakeholders who first must reach consensus on what a project's objectives and goals should be. Once this is accomplished, implementation plans must delineate tasks to be accomplished and designate persons responsible for the tasks. They also must establish time-lines and benchmarks as well as identify expected outcomes. In doing these things, the plans serve as "living" documents that are revised, updated, or expanded as the projects progress and learn from their experiences, whether successful or unsuccessful.

Category I Projects

Three Category I projects began their activities with a clear vision, which sustained their efforts through the implementation process. Project staff in Denver, Houston, and Seattle understood what were their goals for the projects and also how the projects fit into the larger vision their communities had developed for youth employment services.

In Philadelphia, the vision for the project came from a small number of school officials and was not well-connected to goals DOL had set for the demonstration. Lacking direction, project leaders continued to struggle to align the project with an achievable vision. In Richmond, community-based partners and the city did not share a common vision for youth. The denouement of the struggle between the two occurred when the city took over project management and became the primary deliverer of services.

Several Category I projects were unclear about the nature of a demonstration. Initially they were unaware that the demonstration required them to develop all the major components of the integrated services model. Others struggled with how they would be evaluated, assuming that the major assessment of their programs would be tied to a particular outcome, such as the number of youth enrolled and served or the number of youth holding jobs at the end of the demonstration period. When it became clear that many participants were too young to be working full time, the projects feared that their efforts would be discounted.

Program goals evolved to some degree in each project as staff became better acquainted with the youths' needs and the opportunities to serve them better. The projects added more educational services once they realized how difficult it would be to place youth without a high school education. The award of Youth Opportunity grants to two communities also meant that in the case of those projects more services became available to YODP youth. In general, the projects struggled to assist youth with deep and special needs such as those involving drug treatment, support for teen parents, and similar services.

A task for all projects was developing a shared vision among partners. Many partners had worked with each other in previous efforts to serve youth, but the YODP partnership also required that they develop common terms and definitions, overcome some local agency operating cultures and procedures, and agree on ways to engage project youth.

All Category I projects experienced good local support and several had developed a broad network of stakeholders. In general, project advisory committees consisted primarily of partners' representatives. But Denver, Houston, and Richmond also formed larger networks of youth service providers who were beginning to broaden the options for serving targeted youth.

Category II Project

The Ohio Category II project was well-planned. Its plan was rooted in an assessment of the disconnected relationship between residential correctional facilities and the youths' home communities. In retrospect, project staff recognized that the plan was too complex for a two-year demonstration that involved: two correctional facilities, one a state facility and the other a county facility; two municipalities; two school districts; and youth who spanned a wide age range and had multiple and different needs.

Category III Projects

To a large extent, the planners and managers of Category III projects understood and attempted to incorporate into their projects practices and principles that have been shown to reduce youth delinquency and crime, while also developing the potential of youth to lead happy and productive lives. In this sense then, the six projects demonstrated that they had "a clear vision" for their efforts. To reach their goals, all grantees designed their projects as enhancements to existing programs.

As in the case of Category I projects, there was some uncertainty among staffs at several Category III projects about how evaluators would measure their efforts and determine whether they were successful. This resulted in some confusion about the nature of the program's objectives and goals, which in turn clouded the visions of several projects. Initially, it appeared that the projects assumed that they would be evaluated mainly on their ability to place clients in jobs, rather than on their ability to develop and enhance linkages and partnerships with other organizations and agencies.

This was the case even though the DOL Statement of Work for the projects specified that Category III projects were to focus on strengthening existing partnerships.

The result of this misunderstanding was goal displacement in which some projects tended to concentrate much of their efforts on tasks that were not related to the primary thrust of the project. Initially this was especially the case in Clifton and Pensacola and somewhat the case in Bakersfield.

Both Bakersfield and Pensacola adjusted their visions and plans toward the end of the 24-month period when it became apparent that their plans were not working as envisioned. In Bakersfield, for example, the project began to better balance its efforts to build partnerships while also providing some services directly. In Pensacola, project officials began to establish a strong partnership with a charter school in the targeted neighborhood to train project youth. The project also took steps to integrate the project more fully into its existing aftercare program.

For the most part, the projects were properly organized and adequately staffed with competent and skilled workers. Advisory committees, which usually met monthly, consisted primarily of partnership representatives. In general, implementation proceeded generally according to designs specified in the original grant applications, although in some instances there were significant delays before clients were recruited. In some cases, however, projects did not closely follow implementation plans they had outlined early on and instead focused their efforts on finding jobs for clients.

Lessons Learned: Successful projects develop well-conceived implementation plans by involving stakeholders and front-line staffs. Clear vision results from consensus that is reached among partners and stakeholders early on in a project's life cycle, often through advisory councils. For future demonstration projects, it may be necessary to better educate project staffs about grant requirements and what should be the focus of their grants so they clearly and fully understand their responsibilities. Intensive on-site technical assistance and facilitation of planning sessions also may help ensure that projects quickly get on track and that they remain focused on their primary tasks.

2. Established Partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System

Successful projects are knowledgeable about the culture and operating procedures of the juvenile justice system. And, preferably, they have gained experience by collaborating with it in the past on youth-oriented programs. As a result of efforts, they also have established strong communications systems with judges, district attorneys, and probation officers in their communities.

Category I Projects

Category I grantees would have benefited if they had established solid relationships with the juvenile justice system before they received the YODP grant award. DAYS in Denver and YSB in Richmond had such a relationship, and one of Seattle's partners was the King County Superior

Court. In Philadelphia, however, it took the hiring of a former probation officer as project coordinator to overcome problems that resulted from the lack of a strong connection with the court system. HoustonWorks also needed to intercede directly with the Texas Youth Commission to gain referrals from probation officers in the regional office.

Case managers often needed to better understand how the juvenile justice system operates in order to assist youth and their families navigate through the system and learn its requirements and expectations. In Denver, one case manager became the "specialist" in court cases, taking on most clients who needed to make court appearances.

By spring 2001, Philadelphia had formed a new project advisory committee, made up primarily of judges, district attorneys and other court and youth-serving agency staff to help the project establish a direction to provide sustainable support for court-supervised youth. In Seattle, judges were invited to White Center to observe for themselves the progress the youth were making in the project.

Category II Project

In Ohio, the grantee and the organization responsible for project management already were part of the juvenile justice system. The grantee and the staff of the county's confinement facility, however, did not share a common vision for working with youth targeted for the project. Moreover, project leaders were not in a position to influence state, city, and county educational policies. As a result, the project's energy shifted from making a school-to-work system operational to strengthening the aftercare system for county youth.

Category III Projects

Several Category III projects had experience working with the juvenile justice system and benefited from it . This was especially the case in Knoxville where the project was run by the Truancy Center staff and where a police officer served as chair of its advisory board.

There was also strong involvement of the juvenile justice system in Clifton where probation officers oversaw the demonstration project. In addition, the Rockford project was run by a former probation officer and benefited from his knowledge and 12 years of experience with that county's juvenile justice system. The Bakersfield project, which initially included a retired probation officer on its staff, also depended heavily upon assignment of clients through the juvenile justice system.

The Minneapolis project, however, had some early difficulty recruiting clients through the juvenile justice system, even though the project manager once served as a police officer in Texas. This situation appeared to result from an overabundance of similar youth programs and services available for probation officers to choose from. Once the project's reputation as a credible and worthwhile program was established, however, referrals of clients through the juvenile justice system picked up considerably.

Lessons Learned: If projects lack knowledge about the juvenile justice system, they need to ensure that they include representatives from the juvenile justice system in their planning and then as significant partners during implementation.

3. Collection and Maintenance of Data

Well-managed and effectively operated demonstration projects have in place, and use, a system for collecting and reporting program information. In the case of the YODP, however, all 12 projects suffered from a lack of a uniform reporting system. It should be noted that this was not a requirement of the grants for all three categories of projects.

Although the projects generally maintained their own records, reports they submitted provided data in different formats. The reports also did not uniformly classify participants according to services they received, demographic information, or their status in the project. Nor did the reports provide other information that evaluators could use to help determine project performance and whether the projects were meeting expectations, objectives, and goals.

While collection of data is important for measuring program performance, it is important to note that performance indicators and evaluation by objectives by themselves are rarely adequate or suitable for evaluating programs. In many cases, focusing too much on outcome measures leads to goal displacement by the program staffs. This results in staff aversion to testing innovative approaches out of fear of failure or an over-focus on short-term tasks that are being measured by evaluators.

In general all Category I and Category III project partners collected data to support their activity reports. The reports were designed to support each partner's agency goals and were submitted along each partner's accountability path. The difficulty was that the projects were slow to develop a project-specific reporting system that integrated activity reports from all the partners. Further, record systems were not uniform in reporting categories and definitions. Developing integrated and consistent reporting systems would have helped project managers identify problems earlier and would have alerted the technical assistance and evaluation teams to ask questions about aspects of the projects.

Similarly, every partner in the Ohio Category II project collected data, but an integrated information reporting system was not developed during the demonstration period. The project manager kept some common counts of youth by service, but reporting limitations meant that no one had a good understanding of what youth received what services or had achieved what outcomes.

Demonstration grants are not designed to be driven by numbers, so insisting that projects develop a database of activity records from the beginning could prove problematic. Some project staff repeatedly asked what other demonstration reports were like: how many enrolled, how many were in school, and other similar questions. These comparisons would not have been useful because the

projects were designed differently and were being implemented differently. A clearer understanding of the nature of demonstrations would have alleviated such concerns.

Lessons Learned: Reporting requirements for projects should be established and specified clearly at the beginning of demonstration projects. Evaluations, however, must avoid focusing on short-term outcomes or performance indicators to avoid goal displacement among project staffs.

4. Developed Community Support/Network

The experiences of demonstration projects reinforced the importance for projects to have broad-based community support, if they are to succeed. For juvenile crime prevention to work, there must be a commitment and sense of ownership by major agencies and interests that play a role in these efforts. Especially important is the need for projects to nurture support from youth and family serving agencies, such as community-based organizations and other public service organizations.

Category I Projects

In the case of two Category I projects, Denver and Houston, the YODP was one piece in city- or county-wide plans for youth employment in their enterprise communities. Seattle's YODP was part of King County's pilot to reduce the need for an additional residential facility for youth. All three of these projects were pieces of a much larger and well-publicized effort to bring services to youth. All had the attention and support of both political and agency leadership.

Richmond's project was the product of several small agencies with a particular passion for youth in their neighborhoods. These agencies convinced the city's employment and training office to submit the proposal without being very connected to either its planning or operation. Similarly, in Philadelphia, a staff member of the School District of Philadelphia prepared the proposal as a dropout prevention scheme and convinced the then-private industry council to submit it — again without either involvement in the plan or in the operation. When problems arose, grantees realized they needed to become more involved. In Philadelphia's situation as well, the school district did not have the relationships within the city agencies or community-based organizations that could have leveraged resources better for the project.

During the demonstration period, Denver and Houston formed larger networks of youth serving agencies that were able to leverage additional services for YODP youth. Being well-connected to these larger networks provided useful information and training as well as additional resources.

Category II Project

There was strong inter-agency support for the Ohio project, and it operationalized several key recommendations of the county juvenile justice plan. Local foundations and government funding sources significantly expanded aftercare services for youth.

Category III Projects

In the case of Category III projects, three of them — Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford — had in place well-established partnerships and relationships with public, private, and non-profit agencies and organizations that provided youth and family services. The Knoxville project, for example, benefited from the partnership network that had been developed by the Truancy Center. Likewise, Minneapolis benefited from the partnerships developed by its large and well-established parent organization, the Employment Action Center, that specialized in providing services, including job placement, to adults and youth who were at-risk of court involvement. In Rockford, the project essentially became a component of its well-established YouthBuild project and was able to take advantage of its services and funding streams, including the $5 million it received annually in grants and in-kind services.

The other three projects — Bakersfield, Clifton, and Pensacola — did not have strong partnerships and community support in place before their start-up. As a result, these projects struggled with developing strong agreements with other agencies that could provide services to clients.

Pensacola, which had the fewest number of participants of the Category III projects, was important to consider because initially it relied mainly upon elements of other programs that were run within the Office of Juvenile Studies at the University of West Florida for client recruitment. These included the OJS aftercare program and Blackwater Creek Development Center, a medium-security confinement facility for youth. Toward the end of the project, however, OJS was in the process of developing a strong partnership with a charter school in the project's target area while it also was more fully integrating the demonstration project into its aftercare program.

Lessons Learned: Successful projects nurture broad-based community support and rely heavily upon partnerships with private, public, and non-profit agencies and organizations.

5. Grantee Involvement

Evaluations of the demonstration projects appear to suggest that well-managed and operated projects are those in which grantees remain involved in all phases of the projects. The grantees serve as the lead agency and actively provide direction and coordination for the projects, even when they subcontract project responsibilities to other organizations. In addition, involvement and support of grantees must be continuous throughout the projects.

Category I Projects

Category I projects varied in the degree of grantee involvement. HoustonWorks USA kept the project in-house, while grantees in Philadelphia and Richmond passed the funds through to other organizations. Denver and Seattle contracted out management of the projects, but remained actively involved as coaches and facilitators.

The Seattle and Denver model seemed to work best for implementing the project. Leadership expectations were clear, and the project was unencumbered by the reorganization both grantees underwent as the WIA legislation was implemented and as they prepared to implement large Youth Opportunity (YO) grants. Houston, on the other hand, was caught up in the reorganization and the preparation for the YO grant. These seemed to be factors in delaying the YODP implementation process. As mentioned earlier, having the grantee uninvolved in project implementation proved to be very difficult, and ultimately impossible. Both the Philadelphia and Richmond grantees needed to become engaged and to provide direction.

The confluence of WIA legislation and the special award of YO grants may have been idiosyncratic events, not likely to affect future projects, however. At least in the case of Denver and Seattle, it appeared that having the grantee outside the day-to-day operation seemed to have a value in itself. Project leaders had a more complete view of how the YODP fit into their cities' vision. And, they had a more neutral perspective on the struggle to develop a project culture apart from those of their member agencies. The grantees, nonetheless, maintained a leadership role in shaping the operation and activities of the grant.

Category II Project

The Ohio grantee remained involved in the project's advisory board. The Department of Youth Services also contributed additional funds to assist youth in the program. Greater cooperation between state youth offender workers in the regional office with county-level juvenile justice workers was considered a key benefit of the demonstration.

Category III Projects

In the case of five of the six Category III projects, broad oversight responsibility was maintained by the organization that had been awarded the demonstration grant. But day-to-day management responsibilities were subcontracted to another organization. The projects were:

- Knoxville where the Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) subcontracted with KCDC, a large non-profit organization, that also ran the Truancy Center;
- Minneapolis where the city's Metropolitan Employment and Training Program subcontracted to the Employment Action Center (EAC);
- Rockford where the Rock River Training Corporation subcontracted to YouthBuild and its parent organization;
- Pensacola where the Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Board subcontracted to the Office of Juvenile Studies, University of West Florida; and

- Clifton where Passaic County Workforce Development Center subcontracted to the county's probation department.

The one remaining Category III project, Bakersfield, did not subcontract responsibility for day-to-day management of the project. The Employer's Training Resource, the grantee, retained control and provided some limited services directly to clients.

Three of the five projects that were subcontracted generally succeeded in reaching their goals. These were Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford. Projects in Clifton and Pensacola, which also subcontracted, were less successful.

It should be noted that the degree of supervision varied among projects. In general, it appeared that grantees of the more-successful projects — Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford — provided stronger oversight and were more closely involved with the agencies they had subcontracted to. Those organizations that subcontracted in Clifton and Pensacola were not as closely involved in the projects. At least in the case of Category III projects, however, more research is needed to better understand the level of involvement required of grantees to produce the best outcomes.

Lessons Learned: If projects are to be successful, grantees must remain involved in all phases of the projects. Grantees must serve as the lead agency and continuously provide direction and coordination for the projects.

6. Connection to Workforce Development and Juvenile Justice Systems

Staffs of well-managed and operated projects not only have experience and knowledge about the workings of the workforce development and juvenile justice systems, but they also take advantage of and maximize resources that are available through the two systems. To more fully integrate services, project staff also should work to enhance coordination among the two systems.

Category I Projects

Category I projects that did not have youth employment experience quickly learned how important it was to have connections with agencies that did. Projects learned about the need to have employers who were willing to closely supervise YODP youth and to teach them how to fit into the world of work, including its requirements for regular attendance and punctuality, appropriate demeanor and attire, and the ability to work in groups and handle stress. Indeed, the YODP demonstrated that the youth offender population makes special demands on employers who must understand that these employees have multiple problems to overcome, including criminal records.

Denver's DAYS began the project without youth employment experience and learned a great deal by being part of the network established by the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. The Denver Workforce Initiative and DenverWorks partners also helped the DAYS staff traverse a steep

learning curve. Seattle's Pacific Associates brought good experience, skill, and an employer network to the project to augment the experiences of other partners. The Philadelphia project team had no experience to build on and, as a result, struggled to acquire it throughout the YODP. The Richmond project team also struggled to develop a network for unsubsidized work experience.

A major drawback to job placement efforts of all the projects was the low level of job readiness of youth recruited for the projects. Large numbers of them were under the age of 16, an age when they generally begin looking for work. A few of the youth were 18 and older, an age when they might be expected to work full time. The short duration of the DOL grant in relation to the age of the youth being served was one problem for demonstrating the effectiveness of the integrated services model.

An issue related to age was that project staffs learned that services for younger and older youth needed to be designed differently. Seattle and Philadelphia designed different strategies for the different age groups. The other projects, however, learned as they went along, particularly that they needed to get younger youth back into school, rather than into jobs. With older youth, the major task became getting them into jobs and then wrapping developmental services around their work schedules.

Deeper issues also surfaced during the demonstration period. Most project youth had not been successful in school and placing them in jobs without high school diplomas or GED certificates was very difficult. All projects invested more effort in helping youth stay in school, getting youth back into school, and offering GED preparation than they originally had planned.

Many youth also had significant employment barriers beyond education. A large number, for example, were abusing alcohol and drugs. And, many of them were already parents. Many youth also were living in situations that made it difficult for them to acquire more constructive behaviors. In general, project staff tried to get youth into substance abuse treatment, provide child care for parents, and offered anger management and anti-violence training. Case workers reported driving youth to get their driver's license or taking them to interviews to help them overcome some of these barriers. The level and complexity of youths' needs, however, were daunting for all projects.

Projects also became aware that services designed for young males were not always sufficient to serve young females. Project staff had begun to hold discussion groups and awareness classes for female participants, and they reported that the young women attended these even when attendance was not required. The service needs of young women were, however, not well-conceptualized during the demonstration.

Some resources were discovered in the juvenile justice system, which understood the complex and multiple nature of the youths' problems. Drug treatment services and anger management classes were available through some court offices. Taken as a whole, however, the youths' needs exceeded the YODP communities' resources to serve them.

The main relationship needed with the juvenile justice system was to build a trusting partnership with judges and probation officers. Each project had to do that. A major service to the probation officers and judges was the intensive case management, without the weight of authority surveillance, that the demonstration projects provided the youth. Probation officers also were able to keep reluctant youth engaged. This valuable exchange built on the understanding the projects had developed with authorities that the youth would be constructively involved as YODP clients.

Some Category I projects were not particularly aware of the gang situation in their city. The development of collaborations with the juvenile justice system, however, enabled staffs to learn more about the presence of gangs and to develop counter measures — often with help from local anti-gang or anti-violence coalitions.

Category II Project

The juvenile justice system and community and faith-based service agencies collaborated to offer job training and job placement services for the Ohio project. The city and county WIA youth councils had been approached for additional funding for project participant services.

Category III Projects

Several Category III projects used and coordinated closely with juvenile justice systems in their areas. Bakersfield, Clifton, Knoxville, and Minneapolis were particulary successful at using the juvenile justice system to provide clients to the projects.

Category III projects also attempted to connect their projects with the workforce development system in their areas, although they experienced varying degrees of success doing that. Knoxville's Workforce Investment Board, for example, provided a teacher who helped clients prepare for the GED certificate. In Minneapolis, the project worked with One-Stop centers to provide clients some services. The Rockford project established a good working relationship with the local workforce development system, but used it only sparingly, mainly because of the self-contained nature of the project. In Bakersfield, One-Stop centers became more integrated into the project as workers at the centers became more familiar with the Workforce Investment Act, which required providing some services to youth. And, in Clifton the project used the One-Stop centers for job leads for project youth.

There were difficulties, however. In Pensacola, although the grantee was the local Workforce Investment Board, project clients were able to access only limited services through One-Stop centers. Apparently Florida rules required One-Stop centers to channel clients under 18 years old into academic programs. This appeared problematic, considering that many project clients, or prospective clients, were functioning at low academic levels and had been unsuccessful in school.

Several project managers strengthened their projects by serving on youth councils of local Workforce Investment Boards. These included managers in Knoxville, Pensacola, and in Rockford where the project manger also served on the state youth council. Service on the councils often resulted in additional funds for the projects. Project NOVA in Knoxville, for example, received an $80,000 grant through its youth council. And YouthBuild in Rockford, over a two-year period, received $250,000 in grant funds by working through the local Workforce Investment Board. It appeared that service on youth councils not only paid off financially in some cases, but also provided exposure and publicity for the projects and the services they provided. This in itself helped the projects establish new partnerships and strengthen existing ones.

It is worth noting, however, that some projects appeared confused about the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and how it could benefit the projects. The manager in Rockford also noted that Workforce Investment Boards required excessive paperwork for clients, compared to requirements from other federal agencies.

Lessons Learned: To avoid uncertainty and confusion, projects should become knowledgeable of the Workforce Investment Act and the potential opportunities it can provide youth. Projects should learn how One-Stop centers operate and become more closely involved with the youth councils of local Workforce Investment Boards. The projects need to better understand how the workforce development system can help them more effectively deliver services to their target populations and secure funding once grant funds end. Greater attention also should be given to educating the projects about how they can strengthen partnerships with the juvenile justice system. In this sense, the projects must learn why it is important to educate prosecutors, judges, and probation officers in their communities about how the projects can serve as tools to help reduce youthful crime and recidivism.

7. Leveraging Resources Through Collaboration and Partnerships

An important part of any project or program is its ability to deliver something of value to its clients. Well-managed and operated programs identify and use other resources and funding streams to support their goals. Building linkages and collaborative partnerships, which allow organizations to participate in joint activities, also encourage development of innovative approaches for problem-solving and delivery of services.

Without strong partnerships, organizations often find themselves alone and without broad political and financial support for their efforts. Quite often the dynamics and interactions that result from partnerships are more important than any effort or intervention undertaken by a single organization.

Category I Projects

As mentioned earlier, partners of Category I projects learned from each other and received resources through networks they developed over time. These alliances and partnerships matured over the

course of the demonstration: two projects were experimenting with fee-for-service vouchers to expand services and vendor options available to the youth; some were experimenting with offering space in youth centers for other organizations to provide services or to be community links to the WIA system; some were developing city or county networks of youth development service providers.

Development of these collaborations took time — time to get the model elements into place and time to engage youth. Time, therefore, became an important resource for the projects. One measure of its importance was the increase in the number of clients served in the last few months of the demonstration period. By then partners had solved many of their internal struggles, had learned better how to find and engage youth, and had earned the trust of court-referral sources.

The most difficult relationship to develop was with local school districts. Many school districts were not open to working with youth who had not been very successful in classes and had often been behavior problems. The projects began working more closely with schools when the importance of finishing high school or a GED, as essential for employment, became clearer. It would have been helpful if the schools had become more fully engaged as project partners from the start. (For similar future youth offender demonstrations, additional DOL funding may be required to ensure that schools become full partners.)

Projects also often did not have strong partnerships with local police. In many communities, a youth's connection with the juvenile justice system began after arrest. In Seattle, however, this was not necessarily the case. There the community police unit, staffed by a deputy sheriff and a community officer, became engaged with youth before trouble began, and they were also beginning to establish a more trusting relationship with project youth. This approach, perhaps, would have strengthened crime prevention aspects of other projects.

Category II Project

The State of Ohio and Cuyahoga County learned from each other and shared resources. They developed a common relapse prevention program, shared the use of the Youth Offender Level of Service (YO-LSI) risk assessment instrument, and were developing a common integrated case management process.

Category III Projects

Several Category III projects were challenged by the task of building and strengthening linkages with organizations that provided services to clients. In general, the six projects attempted, in good faith, to conform to the tasks and responsibilities specified in the DOL Statement of Work that aimed at this objective. More specifically, they sought to enhance existing education, training, and employment services provided in the local community to both youth who were in school and those who were out of school.

The manner in which all six Category III grantees approached these responsibilities after they received their YODP grants, for the most part, was adequate, although disparate in their intensity. The most successful of the projects in this regard — Knoxville — realized early on that effective delivery of services to clients was a shared responsibility that depended upon project partners. Both Bakersfield and Pensacola, until near the end of the demonstration period, struggled to establish effective linkages with other agencies. At the time of the third evaluation site visit in spring 2001, Bakersfield had refocused its efforts to include both providing clients counseling and referrals while also establishing and building linkages. Pensacola also was working hard to build a partnership with a charter school that served its target population.

Lessons Learned: In the future, projects in all three categories should give greater attention to developing community-wide partnerships, rather than focusing primarily on providing services directly to clients. Building and enhancing partnerships will ensure that gaps in services for clients are identified and filled. This was especially important in the case of Category III projects. For all categories of projects, paying greater attention to building solid partnerships also would help ensure that projects become sustainable after grant funding ends. Projects should pay particular attention to establishing partnerships with schools and ensure that they are included in planning early on.

8. Continuous Improvement

Successful demonstration projects conduct self-assessments and actively seek and accept available technical assistance. Successful demonstration projects also identify project objectives they seek to reach as they prepare their implementation plans and use them as benchmarks to gauge their progress. They then periodically assess their progress toward reaching the objectives and take necessary corrective action.

Technical assistance is especially important to new projects and programs because it serves as a valuable improvement and feedback mechanism. In general, specialized technical assistance plans were developed independently for each project and focused on each project's specific needs. During the initial site visits, the consulting team met with community stakeholders, discussed project implementation and available technical assistance. Additional technical assistance, however, was provided semi-weekly by the technical assistance team via telephone and e-mail. Two conferences, one in Washington, DC, and the other in Tampa, Florida, also helped the projects with their technical assistance needs.

The projects used the assistance to help them devise ways to expand existing services, develop strategies to build community capacity, and strengthen relationships with other community organizations or agencies providing services for youth. In addition, the projects effectively used consultants from the National Youth Employment Coalition to augment assistance provided by the technical assistance team.

Category I Projects

Category I projects differed in their openness to training and technical assistance. The staffs of some projects appeared to believe that asking for TA was an admission of inadequacy while others looked for every opportunity to train staff and to learn how other projects were handling common issues. Over time, the projects came to realize the value of having an experienced outsider working with staff and raising questions.

Technical assistance specialists were crucial in assisting struggling projects, and all projects struggled with some aspect of the model or partnerships. The change in openness appeared to occur about the time category-specific conference calls were initiated. These calls focused on peer sharing and advising and were valuable in posing options for various aspects of the service delivery model.

Formal training through conferences also was important in clarifying expectations and in initiating collegial bonds among project staffs. Specific technical assistance visits supplemented these conferences and provided tailored responses to a particular site's issues. Follow-up after the TA intervention allowed the project and the technical assistance teams to plan for on-going support.

The timing of implementing the WIA legislation meant that every community was learning a new way of delivering services and that established bureaucracies were being recast. This loosening of organizational boundaries allowed creative ideas and cross-department initiatives to flourish. The award of YO grants gave several communities the chance to rethink their entire youth employment structure and operations. The demonstration projects benefited from the creative contexts within which they operated.

Only a few projects were developing internal assessments by the end of the demonstration period. Such internal assessments earlier in the demonstration would have allowed the projects to track youth, especially those too young for the workforce during the demonstration, and to see how they fared when they did venture into it. Outcomes assessments also would have yielded valuable lessons about the progress of the youth in jobs and wages. They also would have allowed the projects to better monitor their relationship with the juvenile justice system.

Category II Project

The Ohio project requested technical assistance on several aspects of the project, and virtually renovated the entire operation of the Division of Treatment Services. Grant preparation added more than a dollar of additional funds for every dollar of DOL funds. These funds provided staff for additional services for Cuyahoga County youth offenders. Staff hiring and training raised the skill levels of staff dealing with the target population.

Category III Projects

In accordance with its contract with DOL, Research and Evaluation Associates was to provide only one initial technical assistance visit to Category III projects. Subsequently, authorization was given for an additional technical assistance site visit to each project site. Consultants also facilitated on-site sessions for projects in Bakersfield, Clifton, Knoxville, and Rockford. In addition, project staff from Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Pensacola attended a NYEC-sponsored training session Baltimore, Maryland.

Several projects, used internal assessments to gauge progress toward reaching their objectives and goals. This was the case in Rockford, which was required to meet requirements specified by its parent organization, YouthBuild. Projects in Pensacola and Knoxville, and Minneapolis, which were operated under a subcontract, also were reviewed by original grantees.

Lessons Learned: The demonstration projects found technical assistance — although in the case of Category III projects limited — helpful and necessary. In the future, all categories of projects should receive intensive technical assistance, especially help in developing expected outcomes that will allow the projects to better gauge their progress toward their objectives and goals. Technical assistance appeared essential to help projects with their efforts to counter the effects of gangs within target neighborhoods and ensure that the projects remain on track and receive help when they encounter problems. In the future, technical assistance also should ensure that the projects use their implementation plans, especially expected project outcomes, as an essential part of their continuous improvement mechanisms. In the end, these efforts can only enhance the abilities of the projects to fulfill project objectives and goals and become sustainable.

9. Shared Leadership and Information Sharing

In successful projects, lead agencies and their staffs share both the leadership and credit for the results of their programs with other stakeholders. Successful programs also share information with other stakeholders so that fully integrated — and effective — services can be provided to clients. If programs fail to follow these basic axioms, the philosophy, purpose, and often credibility of projects is undermined. As a result, the programs may struggle or be less successful than they could have.

Category I Projects

All Category I projects gained from shared leadership and information sharing. The partnerships themselves became small learning communities, exchanging expertise and skills. The larger partnerships that developed in several communities during the demonstration aimed at bringing all youth development specialists in the city or county network to a common approach, common terms, and a commitment to leveraging resources.

Every Category I project had a distinct aspect that helped strengthen the demonstration. Denver had the Piton Foundation and its work readiness assessment tools. Seattle and Denver had a common location for all the services delivered to youth, and it became "their" place more than in other projects. Houston had the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office (MAGO), a resource that bridged the police gang unit's knowledge and the youth development service providers working with gang-involved youth. Several projects had the assistance of partners who were not funded under the DOL grant. (The development of youth-serving vendor networks was described earlier.)

Category II Project

The regional office of the Ohio Department of Youth Services and the staff of the county's Department of Justice Affairs, Division of Treatment Services, shared information and respected each other's expertise.

Category III Projects

The more successful Category III projects took to heart the points about the importance of sharing leadership and information. Although more research is needed into this issue, it appeared that those projects that developed strong partnerships with other agencies and organizations and shared ideas, values, philosophies, approaches, and responsibilities were more effective than those that did not.

Lessons Learned: Organizations that have to focus a great deal of their efforts on creating partnerships and have not shared leadership and information about the project with other partners experience difficulties building and maintaining momentum for their projects.

Contextual Aspects of Projects

As discussed above, a project's success depended heavily upon the degree that it reflected the nine components of the organizational model of public management. There were, however, contextual factors outside a project's control or sphere of influence that tended to either hamper or help a project's staff as it attempted to implement the project.

Many contextual aspects were site-specific and affected only that site. Some aspects appeared to occur serendipitously, such as when a new mayor who supported the project was elected. Evaluators, nonetheless, identified two important contextual aspects that appeared to influence all of the projects, regardless of their category. These were:

- The presence or absence of supportive communities and
- The strength of local economies.

Presence or Absence of Supportive Communities

Communities that identify problems, such as those involving youthful offenders, and then create a favorable environment in which all parties are encouraged to work together are more effective in solving them. This kind of an environment is important because it encourages different people and organizations to support each other by coordinating their efforts, which in turn maximizes their strengths and capabilities.

The presence or absence of support from local institutions and community groups affected the strength of effort and pace of movement as the projects progressed toward implementation of their plans. In general, projects that had the support of local politicians and officials and community leaders appeared to progress more quickly, while those that lacked positive community support often encountered delays and barriers that impeded their progress.

Community support for the projects varied among all three categories. In the case of Category III projects it appeared that the strongest community support was found in Minneapolis and Knoxville. The weakest community support appeared to be in Clifton and Pensacola.

It should be noted, however, that many projects in all categories experienced some difficulty building good working relationships with local school systems — despite the existence of generally broad community support. Sometimes the reason for this was political. Such appeared to be the case in Pensacola where pressure from parents and others encouraged the school system to expel disruptive students rather than attempting to find ways to meet their needs. In Knoxville, the project coordinator also found it somewhat difficult to convince school officials to release students to the project where they would have gained more from GED training than by staying in school. The apparent reason for this was that the school system was concerned about keeping its enrollment figures up in order to assure funding.

Strength of Local Economies

The demonstration projects were initiated in 1999, a time when the United States was experiencing an unprecedented economic boom. The generally excellent national economic picture that continued well into 2001 was reflected in low unemployment and inflation rates as well as increases in worker productivity. Faced with a tight labor market, many employers were eager to find workers — both skilled and unskilled.

Projects in all categories benefited marginally from the economic boom. Unfortunately, however, placing project clients in jobs with long-term career potential became a difficult task for most of the projects in all categories. The reason was that many clients were ill-prepared for the work force, primarily because they lacked diplomas or GED certificates, had low academic aptitudes and skills, had debilitating personal problems, and had been offenders. As a result, the jobs that were found for many clients were in the service sector, primarily in fast food restaurants, janitorial services, and

the like, which required little education or few technical skills. In the absence of a strong economy, the task of placing project clients in jobs undoubtedly would have been even more daunting.

SUMMARY

Demonstration projects by their nature are essentially learning experiences for all those who are involved in them — stakeholders, sponsors, evaluators, technical assistance providers, and others who support the effort. Indeed, the two-year-long Youth Offender Demonstration Project showed this was the case.

Profiting from the 24-month demonstration experience were the Departments of Labor and Justice, the 14 projects that received grant funds, and evaluators and technical assistance providers at Research and Evaluation Associates. Several benefits that these groups received are briefly discussed below.

Lessons for the Departments of Labor and Justice

In a broad sense, both the Department of Labor and Department of Justice gained additional and valuable experience from working as collaborative partners on the Youth Offender Demonstration Project. The project required the departments to share information and ideas about how to best prepare youthful offenders and those at risk of court involvement for productive employment and successful lives. In the process of collaborating, the departments had to learn each other's jargon, values, philosophies, and methods of operation as they pertained to this special population. At times doing this may have seemed like learning a foreign language or living in a foreign culture. The Justice Department, for example, had to expand its knowledge about the operations and requirements of the Workforce Investment Act, the state and local One-Stop delivery systems, as well as the Labor Department's approach to demonstration projects. On the other hand, the Labor Department had to become more knowledgeable about the intricacies of the justice system, as well as the department's approach and the challenges of working with youth who were under court-imposed restrictions.

In the process of "dialoguing" and working together, the departments were able to identify gaps in theories and approaches that were used to address the problems facing youthful offenders and those who are at risk of court involvement. The tangible result of this experience was to expand the demonstration for a new group of projects in summer of 2001. More specifically, as a result of the learning that occurred, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services was added as a third partner as part in the national effort to learn how to better serve youth offenders, including those who have learning, drug-abuse, and other mental health problems.

Lessons for Projects

For the 12 projects that were a part of this process evaluation, the most important lesson learned, perhaps, involved the role that technical assistance can play in helping them succeed. Initially it appeared that the projects were uncertain about whether to request assistance from the technical assistance team in areas where they were struggling or having difficulty. These include, for example: how to ensure sustainability after grant funding ends; how to provide effective route counseling (case management) to project clients; and how to ameliorate the effects of staff turnover.

Initially it appeared that the projects feared that requesting help would reveal their inadequacies and weaknesses and open them to monitoring and closer scrutiny. This misunderstanding about the role played by technical assistance changed, however, as the projects became more comfortable working with the technical assistance team and learned how the team could assist them in identifying problem areas and strengthening their efforts to reach their objectives and goals. As the projects progressed, they became more willing to ask for help — and to receive it.

For future demonstration projects, it will be important for the evaluation and technical assistance teams to gain their confidence. It also will be important for the projects to learn the role that the teams will play as part of their continuous improvement mechanisms as they strive to progress toward their objectives and goals. These tasks will be accomplished through training and orientation during kick-off conferences, telephone conference calls, and site visits by the evaluation and technical assistance teams during the early days of the projects.

Lessons for Evaluation and Technical Assistance Teams

As the initial round of demonstration projects proceeded, the evaluation and technical assistance teams gained valuable insights and information as well as new tools to help the projects progress. As a result, the teams will be able to further refine the methodologies and approaches they use during future demonstration projects.

One particularly important tool that resulted from the YODP was the organizational model of public management that identified nine characteristics of well-managed and operated demonstration projects. The model, which was presented in detail earlier in this report, was used by the evaluation and technical assistance teams to help them gauge the progress each project was making toward its objectives and goals. The model will be further refined as additional projects proceed with their planning and implementation in hopes that it will become a standardized tool for studying and evaluating programs and projects involving youthful offenders and youth who are at risk of court involvement.

As a result of the information and experience provided by the initial demonstration project, the evaluation and technical assistance teams will collaborate more closely and share information about the implementation of future projects, rather than operating independently. The two teams will become integral parts of each project's continuous improvement feedback mechanism. This

approach should help the projects identify gaps in their implementation plans and devise effective strategies to overcome barriers they encounter. It also should help the projects move toward implementation more quickly, while avoiding the pitfalls, or learning curve, that naturally goes with such a complex undertaking as the Youth Offender Demonstration Project.

CLOSING

This process evaluation report provides an assessment of the implementation process undertaken by each project and, to the extent possible, it reflects how effective the projects were in building upon existing programs and systems to serve targeted youth. Although the demonstration project continues with additional projects until the summer of 2003, and, perhaps, beyond the report's major findings for the initial YODP have indicated:

- Partnerships between youth offender agencies and workforce development agencies provide an important connection that can further each agency's mission.
- The partnerships are likely to continue and the YODP was the instrument for this breakthrough.
- Youth indicated that the promise of jobs at a decent wage is what drew them to the local projects and it is what kept them engaged with the projects.
- Use of a crime prevention model that includes employment, training, and placement services appears critical for these youth.
- The project's promise and ability to help youth transition to employment was a major feature that led many probation officers to local projects.
- It may take additional time to demonstrate that an investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders, or youth at risk of criminal involvement, successfully transitioning to full-time employment.

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APPENDIX A

Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)

Billing Code 4510-30

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

ACTION: Notice inviting proposals for Youth Offender demonstration projects.

SUMMARY: This notice contains all of the necessary information and forms to apply for grant funding. The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration is authorized to award grants to provide services aimed at youth who are or have been under criminal justice supervision or involved in gangs. In setting aside these funds, Congress noted "the severe problems facing out-of-school youth in communities with high-poverty and unemployment and the inter-relatedness of poverty, juvenile crime, child abuse and neglect, school failure, and teen pregnancy." The Department of Labor (DOL) has worked with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the Department of Justice (DOJ) in deciding to use these funds for three categories of projects to serve youth offenders. They are, I. Model Community Projects; II. Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiatives; and III. Community-Wide Coordination Projects.

All proposals must by submitted by the Service Delivery Area (SDA). Applicants can only apply under one of these categories which must be clearly identified on the face sheet of the application.

DATES: Applications will be accepted commencing September 2, 1998. The closing date for receipt of applications is December 1, 1998, at 4 P.M. (Eastern Time) at the address below.

ADDRESS: Applications must be mailed to Ms. Denise Roach, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Acquisition and Assistance, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room S-4203, Washington, DC 20210, Reference: SGA/DAA 98-015.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Questions should be faxed to Ms. Denise Roach, Division of Acquisition and Assistance, Fax (202) 219-8739. This is not a toll-free number. All inquiries should include the SGA number (DAA 98-015) and a contact name and phone number. This solicitation will also be published on the Internet, on the Employment and Training Administration's Home page at http://www.doleta.gov. Award notifications will also be published on the Home Page.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Funding for these awards is authorized under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Title IV, Pilot and Demonstration. Applicants must clearly identify which category they are applying for. This information must appear on the face sheet of the application. **IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR APPLICATION BE SUBMITTED USING THE FACE SHEET INCLUDED IN APPENDIX "A", AS THIS WILL GREATLY ENHANCE OUR**

REVIEW PROCESS. As a condition for award, applicants must agree to participate in the DOJ evaluation of these demonstration efforts. Funding for this evaluation will be provided to an independent contractor by DOJ. Therefore, no funds awarded under this grant should be set aside for that purpose.

Demonstration sites will be required to collect and maintain participant records through administrative data so that this can be a learning experience for DOL and DOJ. In order to keep participant records, the Standardized Program Information Report (SPIR) required for JTPA Title II programs must be used. The DOJ evaluator will evaluate the process experiences in implementing this youth offender program. However if additional resources become available, the evaluator may also examine intermediate outcomes for the youth. Each applicant must provide an assurance that they will cooperate with the evaluator and provide access to the data necessary to the evaluation.

CATEGORY I - <u>Model Community Projects</u>.

These demonstrations will be set in high-poverty neighborhoods where comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth have already been established. Grant awards will be provided to set up a combination of gang prevention and gang suppression projects; alternative sentencing and community service projects for youth offenders; to support existing case management and job placement services for youth on probation or returning to the community from corrections facilities. These neighborhood-wide projects will then serve as models for other high-poverty, high-crime communities in the country.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS. This award category will be limited to those SDAs that have received grants under DOL's Youth Opportunity Unlimited (YOU), Youth Fair Chance (YFC), or Opportunity Areas for Out-of-School Youth (OASY) demonstrations. Organizations that operate DOJ's Safe Futures or Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression demonstrations, can also apply through their SDAs. These organizations should contact their Mayor's Office for a listing of the SDAs in their area. Applicants should outline how they will involve residents, youth and others of the community in planning and involvement in the effort.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS. Grant funds must be used to build upon an existing system currently serving out-of-school youth, youth offenders or at-risk youth in gangs or prone to joining gangs. Youth employment and developmental activities funded under this grant shall be used for a structured set of activities focused sharply on getting youth offenders and gang members ages 14-24 either into long-term employment at wage levels that will prevent future dependancy and/or break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency that contributes to recidivism and non-productive activities. This overall strategy needs to be responsive to the particular problems of youth offenders and gang members in high-poverty areas. Efforts should be made to integrate youth into educational and alterative school programs when appropriate.

Any new service must also be developed and implemented focusing primarily on the needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and gangs. Employment, education, criminal justice

and community-based youth programs should become an interrelated component of the project. In developing this interrelated system, grant funds shall be used to create a youth offender and gang prevention advisory board that participates in the coordination of all activities and provides input and community support to the project's leadership.

INVESTMENT OF APPLICANT AND PARTNERS. Applicants should use partnerships both (1) to enhance the youth offender programs funded under this grant and (2) to provide complementary programs so as to link services within the target community and provide a diversity of options for all youth offenders within the target area. These partnerships must agree to:

- Implement a training and employment program for youth offenders and gang members in the target area.
- Coordinate with the private sector to develop a specified number of career-track jobs for target area youth offenders.
- Establish alternative sentencing and community service options for youth offenders and gang members in the target area.
- Expand gang suppression activities in the target area.
- Establish a gang prevention advisory board for the target area.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY: The Department expects to award (5) grants approximately $1.5 million each under this category

CATEGORY #1 RATING CRITERIA: Each application under this category will be evaluated against the following rating criteria:

- Need in target neighborhood, as demonstrated by severity of gang problem, the number of youth offenders residing in target community and the inability for existing services to include youth offenders and gang members (35 points);
- Plan and capacity for conducting project including plan for preventing recidivism (40 points);
- Level of investments of schools and other public sector partners (10 points);
- Level of investments of private sector partners, including commitments for private-sector jobs (5 points);
- Linkages and coordination of services (10 points).

CATEGORY II - <u>Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative.</u> These projects would provide comprehensive school-to-work education and training within juvenile corrections facilities, and would also provide follow-up services and job placements as youth leave these

facilities and returned to the community. Again, the comprehensive services developed under this project will serve as a model for other juvenile corrections facilities across the country.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS. The State Juvenile Corrections Agency is the eligible applicants and should identify a juvenile corrections facility within their State where the project will operate. DOJ is considering a formal random assignment evaluation of the effectiveness of the enhanced services being provided under this category. Therefore, juvenile corrections facilities proposed as demonstration sites must have a minimum of 100 youth in residence.

Your application must show the involvement/commitment of the following partners: the SDA which is the administrative entity for Job Training Partnership Act program; the state School-to-Work partnership; the local School-to-Work Partnership to which a majority of the youth offenders will return if clearly defined; and representatives of major employer networks connected to the school-to work effort.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS. Grant funds shall be used to build upon an existing system currently serving youth offenders. Youth employment and developmental activities funded under this grant shall be used for a structured set of activities focused sharply on getting youth offenders and gang members ages 14-24 either into long-term employment at wage levels that will prevent future dependancy and/or break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency that contributes to recidivism and non-productive activities. This overall strategy needs to be responsive to the particular problems of youth offenders and gang members in juvenile corrections facilities.

Programs must be designed to raise the quality of work and learning for incarcerated juvenile offenders, and strengthen follow-up services and aftercare, including mentoring for youth returning to their communities by building connections to local workforce development and School-to-Work systems. This includes the development of a reformed and intensive corrections education program, vocational training with ties to vocational development and youth employment services. The jointly developed curriculum should include input from corrections education, the state School-to-Work partnership, local school districts and employer networks connected to the school-to-work effort. Projects are also encouraged to work with Job Corps centers, in the development of a school-to-work based education curriculum. This curriculum should be linked to the curriculum developed for the communities to which youth offenders will return once leaving juvenile corrections and structured in such a way as to enable the youth to transition from the institution to the community and continue in a sequential manner with their educational and vocational development.

Grant funds should be coordinated with existing programs to provide case management and aftercare for youth returning to communities from juvenile corrections to facilitate community reintegration, healthy lifestyle choices and educational success and skills development. In addition, grant funds may be used for staff and teacher training in order to facilitate an effective system of connected classroom-based and work based activities. The Federal Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) should be considered as necessary tools to assist

with youth offender employment placements. Information regarding these programs will be made available upon award of this grant. Additional funding sources may include Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act formula grants funds and Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) funds. JAIBG funds should be used to compliment those available through this grant to upgrade training facilities within permanent juvenile corrections facilities.

INVESTMENT OF APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS. Applicants should use partnerships both (1) to enhance the youth offender program funded under this grant and (2) to provide complementary programs which make residence communities better able to provide after-care services for all returning youth offenders. The State recipients of a JAIBG award are strongly encouraged to contribute, in the form of a cash match, 10% of the total program cost, except when the JAIBG funds are used for construction of permanent corrections facilities. Partners under this category shall agree to:

- Implement a school-to-work program in the target juvenile corrections facility.
- Provide case management and after-care services to youth offenders returning to their communities.
- Develop linkages to local school-to-work efforts with assistance from the State School-to-Work Partnership.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY: The Department expects to award (2) grants approximately $1.125 million each for Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiatives under this competition.

CATEGORY RATING CRITERIA: Each application for funding under this category will be reviewed and rated against the following criteria:

- Need in target juvenile corrections facility and state juvenile corrections system, as demonstrated by the effectiveness of current curriculum, the number of youth offenders who stand to benefit, and rate of recidivism (25 points);
- Plan and capacity for conducting project including aftercare services and plan for preventing recidivism (40 points);
- Level of investments of schools and other public sector partners including School-to-Work partnerships (15 points);
- Level of investments of private sector partners, including commitments for private-sector jobs (10 points);

- Recidivism prevention plan (10 points).

CATEGORY III - <u>Community-Wide Coordination Projects.</u>

This program component will fund smaller grants for communities within small to medium-sized cities with high-poverty and high-crime. These projects will work with local youth service providers to develop linkages that will strengthen the coordination of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders. Linkages to existing community programs such as the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) year-round youth training and summer jobs for at-risk youth, School-to-Work Programs, and other federal programs could contribute to juvenile crime prevention.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS. Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) within high-crime communities with a population of at least 100,000 and not greater than 400,000 and a significant youth gang and youth crime problem are eligible to apply. Applicants should provide documentation from their local law enforcement agency showing support the existence of an existing or emerging gang problem and other serious youth crime problems. The SDA is the administrative entity for Job Training Partnership Act programs.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS. Grant funds shall be used to build upon an existing systems currently serving in-school and out-of-school youth, youth offenders or youth in gangs or prone to joining gangs. Youth employment and developmental activities funded under this grant shall be used for a structured set of activities focused sharply on getting youth offenders and gang members ages 14-24 either into long-term employment at wage levels that will prevent future dependancy and/or break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency that contributes to recidivism and non-productive activities. This overall strategy needs to be responsive to the particular problems of youth offenders and gang members in high-poverty, high-crime areas. Efforts should be made to integrate youth into educational and alterative school programs when appropriate. The Federal Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) should be considered as necessary tools to assist with youth offender employment placements. Information regarding these programs will be made available upon award of this grant.

INVESTMENT OF APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS. Applicants should use partnerships both (1) to enhance the youth offender programs funded under this grant and (2) to provide complementary programs so as to make the target community an available service area for all youth offenders. Applicants also should agree to a good faith effort to continue projects started under this grant beyond the 24-month grant period. Partners should also agree to:

- Build upon existing employment and training, recreation, conflict resolution and other youth crime and gang prevention programs to include youth offenders and gang members.
- Establish alternative sentencing and community service options for target area youth and gang members.
- Establish or continue gang suppression activities within the target area.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY: The Department expects to award (6) grants approximately $300,000 each to Community-Wide Coordination Projects under this competition.

CATEGORY RATING CRITERIA. Applications received for funding under this category shall be rated against the following criteria:

- Need in target neighborhood, as demonstrated by severity of gang problem, the number of youth offenders residing in target community (30 points);
- Plan and capacity for conducting project including plan for preventing recidivism (30 points);
- Level of investments of schools and other public sector partners (10 points);
- Level of investments of private sector partners, including commitments for private-sector jobs (10 points);
- Current youth offender programs and youth crime prevention strategies (10 points);
- Linkages and coordination of services (10 points).

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: The period of performance for all grants awarded under this competition will be for 24 months from the date the grant is awarded.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL. All applicants must submit and original and three (3) copies of their proposal, with original signatures. The applications shall be divided into two distinct parts. Part I - which contains Standard Form (SF) 424, "Application for Federal Assistance, and Budget Information Sheet." (See appendix "A". All copies of the SF 424 MUST have original signatures of the legal entity applying for grant funds. Applicants shall indicate on the SF-424 the organization's IRS status, if applicable. According to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, Section 18, an organization described in Section 501(c) 4 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 which engages in lobbying activities shall not be eligible for the receipt of federal funds constituting an award, grant or loan. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number is 17.249. In addition, the budget shall include--on a separate page(s)--a detailed cost break-out of each line item on the Budget Information Sheet. Part II shall contain the technical proposal that demonstrates the applicant's plan and capabilities in accordance with the evaluation criteria contained in this notice. Applicants must describe their plan in light of each of the Rating Criteria. Applicants MUST limit the program narrative section to no more than 10 double-spaced pages, on one side only. This includes any attachments. Applications that fail to meet the page limitation requirement may not be considered.

LATE APPLICATIONS. Any application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will not be considered, unless it is received before awards are made and it - (a) was sent by registered or certified mail not later than the fifth

calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application submitted in response to a solicitation requiring receipt of applications by the 20th of the month must have been mailed/post marked by the 15th of that month); or (b) was sent by the U.S. Postal Service Express Mail next Day Service to address not later than 5:00 P.M. at the place of mailing two working days prior to the date specified for receipt of applications. The term "working days" excludes weekends and federal holidays. The term "post marked" means a printed, stamped or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service.

HAND DELIVERED PROPOSALS. It is preferred that applications be mailed at least five days prior to the closing date. To be considered for funding, hand-delivered applications must be received by 4:00 P.M., (Eastern Time), on the closing date at the specified address. TELEGRAPHED AND/FAXED APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE HONORED. Failure to adhere to the above instructions will be a basis for a determination of nonresponsiveness. Overnight express mail from carriers other than the U.S. Postal Service will be considered hand-delivered applications and MUST BE RECEIVED by the above specified date and time.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS. A careful evaluation of applications will be made by a technical review panel who will evaluate the applications against the established criteria under each Category. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Government may elect to award the grant with or without discussions with the offeror. In situations without discussions, an award will be based on the offeror's signature on the SF-424. The final decision on awards will be based on what is most advantageous to the Federal Government, taking into account factors such as geographic diversity, mix of EZs and ECs, and demographic characteristics.

Signed this 28th day of August, 1998

JANICE E. PERRY, GRANT OFFICER

Department of Labor, ETA

APPENDIX B

Scope of Work

ATTACHMENT I

Research Questions for Category #1:

1. In what ways did the projects build upon existing systems currently serving out-of-school youth, youth offenders or at-risk youth in gangs or prone to joining gangs to develop a structured set of activities focused on getting youth offenders and gang members into long-term employment at wage levels that will prevent future dependency? What problems were encountered in doing so? In what ways did the projects address or solve these problems?

2. In what ways did the projects build upon existing systems currently serving out-of-school youth, youth offenders or at-risk youth in gangs or prone to joining gangs to develop a structured set of activities that will break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency that contributes to recidivism? What problems were encountered in doing so? In what ways did the projects address or solve these problems?

3. How are training and employment programs for youth offenders and gang members responsive to the particular problems of these target groups in high-poverty areas? In what ways must effective strategies differ from more traditional approaches?

4. What are the most effective ways to engage employers to provide participants with long-term employment with these target groups?

5. How did the projects work with the court system to establish alternative sentencing and community service options? What were the key building blocks in implementing these alternatives?

6. What rate did the "gang prevention advisory board" play in the project? Was its composition suitable given this role? Was it effective in this role?

Research Questions for Category #2:

1. What are the challenges/problems encountered in building connections to local workforce development and school-to-work systems? In what ways do the projects address these challenges?

2. How do projects effectively develop reformed and intensive education programs and vocational training? In what ways do projects adapt the principles and strategies of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act into their education and training programs?

3. In what ways can the State school-to-work system, local school-to-work partnerships, employer networks, and local school districts effectively collaborate with correctional facilities to develop curricula and programs?

4. How are projects able to build on existing programs to provide case management and aftercare for youth returning to communities from juvenile corrections facilities to facilitate community reintegration, healthy lifestyle choices and educational success and skills development? What are the challenges in doing so, and how do projects address these challenges?

Research Questions for Category #3:

1. In what ways did the projects develop linkages to existing community programs that strengthen prevention and recovery services for youth offenders and gang-prevention efforts?

2. In what ways did the projects build upon existing systems currently serving out-of-school youth, youth offenders or at-risk youth in gangs or prone to joining gangs to develop a structured set of activities focused on getting youth offenders and gang members into long-term employment at wage levels that will prevent future dependency? What problems were encountered in doing so? In what ways did the projects address or solve these problems?

3. In what ways did the projects build upon existing systems currently serving out-of-school youth, youth offenders or at-risk youth in gangs or prone to joining gangs to develop a structured set of activities that will break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency that contributes to recidivism? What problems were encountered in doing so? In what ways did the projects address or solve these problems?

4. How are training and employment programs for youth offenders and gang members responsive to the particular problems of these target groups? In what ways must effective strategies differ from more traditional approaches?

5. What are the most effective ways to engage employers to provide participants with long-term employment with Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit in developing job placements? What other roles can employers play in serving these target groups?

6. How did the projects work with the court system to establish alternative sentencing and community service options? What were the key building blocks in implementing these alternatives?

Tasks

The contractor will perform the following tasks:

1. Coordinate with Technical Assistance Staff. The contractor will coordinate activities between the evaluation and technical assistance staffs and ensure that there is no duplication of effort or excess burden on the grantees.

2. Data Collection. The contractor will collect and analyze site-specific data which will include the MIS data developed under the technical assistance portion of this contract as well as other relevant information collected by the grantees or other organizations.

3. Site Visits. The contractor will conduct periodic site visits to observe the operation of each grantee in the demonstration. For categories 1 and 3, it is anticipated that 3 visits per site will be conducted. The first will be conducted shortly after the contract is awarded, the second approximately mid-way through the grantees' period of performance, and the third shortly before the grants expire. For projects in category 2, there will be an initial site visit shortly after grant award. If the Department of Justice proceeds with an impact evaluation, beyond its initial phase, this will be the only site visit to category 2 grantees. If the Department of Justice decides not to proceed with an impact evaluation, a second site visit will be made immediately after this decision is made and a third site visit will be made near the end of the grantees period of performance. If these site visits are conducted, they will include gathering information from samples (if necessary) of the "home areas" to which youth will return.

4. Analysis and Reporting. The contractor will perform appropriate descriptive and qualitative analyses of information gathered from the MIS, field work and other resources. Reports will communicate the study's findings to both policy and practitioner audiences.

Deliverables

The contractor will submit the following reports, at the time and in the number of copies specified, to the DOL official designated as responsible for the evaluation. If requested, oral briefings will be held on the interim and final reports on the study:

1. Monthly Progress Reports in two (2) copies. The first such report will be due 30 calendar days after the contract beginning date and subsequent reports will be due monthly thereafter. Reports should address monthly progress in terms of completion tasks specified in the statement of work, identification of problems and plans for their resolution and, if necessary, provide an updated work plan for the remainder of the contract period.

2. Design Report in three (3) copies. This design report shall be due 60 calendar days after the contract beginning date. The report shall include a list of research issues to be addressed, detailed descriptions of site visit plans, site visit protocols and other data collection instruments.

3. Site Visit Memoranda in three (3) copies. Within thirty days of the completion of each first round site visit, the contractor will submit a memorandum describing the site's administration, data systems, program and service population as it was at the time of grant award. The memoranda should also briefly describe each grantee's general plan for implementing their proposed strategies for serving youth offenders.

4. Interim Report in ten (10) copies. Within ninety days of completion of the second round of site visits, the contractor will submit a interim report that documents early implementation efforts.

5. Final Report in ten (10) copies, one of which is camera ready. The contractor will submit a separate final report for each grant category and an Executive Summary covering all categories. A detailed outline of the final reports, will be submitted no later than 90 calendar days before the end of the period of performance. Draft final reports shall be submitted no later than 60 days before the contract end date. The final reports, incorporating ETA comments, will be due by the contract end date.

APPENDIX C

Field Research Guide

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Field Research Guide

Site_____
Date_____

Lead Organization (s):

Partners: **Target Community**:

Interviews (Person and Organizational affiliation):

Introduction: Hello. I am _____ representing Research and Evaluation Associates. My firm received a contract form the Department of Labor to observe the development of this Youth Offender Demonstration Project, doing what is known as a process evaluation. I will ask you a set of questions today similar to those that were used during (my/the) first visit by _____ and will be used again when we return next February or March. The questions are designed to show the development of the demonstration project activities that can be described today compared to the baseline visit.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Project Context

We want to know what the community is like in which the YODP develops and operates. Have there been significant changes in the characteristics of the community context of the project (demographic, economic, socio-cultural, and political) since the last visit and how are they impacting project development and implementation?

Data Needs: Collect documents, if possible, or report on:

1.1 Demographic data on the target population in the selected communities

Describe the **demographic composition** of the target community by:

--gender

--ethnicity or race

--age

--marital status (percentages single parents in the target group: counts and percentages).

--family status (under age 18) with family of origin, single on their own, married)

--number of children in the home and residing elsewhere

--current educational status--years completed, (Student, in college or other educational program)

--school status (under age 18) (percentages in school, suspended, dropped out, in other training programs).

1.2 Criminal Justice Status (last 5 years or over as much time as records provide):

--number and types of crimes committed by youth

--number of youth sent to:

alternative sentencing programs

community service

residential confinement

--number in the target area on probation

--number in the target area who leave probation successfully

--number in the target area who are adjudicated after probation (recidivism)

--number of youth involved with the Criminal Justice system who are in the program and the number not in the program

1.3 Community economy

Describe following characteristics of the target community:

--employment status (percentages unemployed, part time job, full-time job),

--income

--major industries/employers and opportunities for youth

1.4 Socio-cultural

Describe the following characteristics of the target community

--youth culture

--gang activity, names of gangs, location on maps of gang boundaries, membership, style, etc. 1,069 active gang members

1.5 Political

Describe the following characteristics of the target community:

--responsiveness of city/county/state government

--history of integrated service delivery and community consensus building

1.6 Community-based Organizations

--description of the schools in the target community, their quality and reputation

--accessible non-school educational and training opportunities for young people in the community.

--community-based organizations, not part of the demonstration project (if any), offering programs for the target population. (Name contact person (include telephone number and street and mailing address information.)

--clinics

--churches

--mentoring or tutoring volunteer groups

--youth programs ("Y," scouting, martial arts, etc.)

--hang outs (Youth Centers, Parks and Recreation Centers, Arcades)

--sports teams, etc.

2. Planning

Q: What role did community planning bodies or councils play during the project?

2.1 Discuss the role community planning bodies or councils played during the project's planning and implementation phases.

--What were the major responsibilities of planning bodies/councils?

--How was consensus for project goals and objectives developed?

--Which stakeholders actively participated in the project?

--In what ways were various stakeholders involved in the project?

--What were the roles of youth and parents on the council?

--How often did planning boards/councils meet?

2.2 Discuss the positive and negative effects their involvement has had on development of the project.

2.3 What were the results of these efforts?

3. Building Partnerships and Linkages

Q: What is the current partnerships network and how has it changed since _____ (month)?

Data needs
Partnering organizations

3.1 Describe the partnerships and linkages developed. (Include contracts memoranda of agreement, etc.)

--What is the connection to the project--MOU, contracts?

--Which partners are funded through the demonstration? Which participate through other funding sources?

3.2 What is the level of participation by:

--Schools in the local public system (probe this especially)
--Employers (probe this especially)
--Probation department staff
--Court system staff
--Employment training staff
--Soft skills staff
--Health care agencies
--Parents
--Grassroots community leaders

3.3 Provide the names and roles of employers who have agreed to work with the Youth Offender Demonstration Project, if not part of the formal arrangement; nclude contact persons and organizations with telephone number and street and mailing address information.

4. Partnership Performance

Q: What program components are implemented and how successful are the efforts to build on existing systems and create an integrated service network? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.1, C1.2, C2.1 C2.4, C3.1, C3.2, C3.3.)

Data Needs

4.1 Names and contact method for all service provider personnel and organizations.

4.2 How is the project organized?

4.3 What is the authority structure?

--Who is accountable to whom?

--Where are data on participants mentioned and in what form are the data? (Get the existing data)

4.4 What is the number of staff directly involved (New&Veteran) with youth?

4.5 How does the program assure that every youth is connected to a caring adult?

4.6 Describe the primary services actually implemented

4.7 How are "best practices" of workforce development built into program services?

Probe:

--individual needs assessment

--job training

--classroom-based learning

--career awareness

--career counseling

--job exploring

--expectations of high skill standards

--integration of academic and vocational learning

--work-based learning

--work experience

--incorporating all aspects of an industry

--facilitation of more schooling or job placement

--job training coordinated with classroom learning

--job training coordinated with career path

--instruction in general workplace competencies

--strategies for matching students with work based learning

--active participation of employers

--regular evaluation of youth's progress

--connecting activities

4.8 Describe the support services that were actually implemented.

--How are best practices incorporated into support services?

--Life skills training

--Transition assistance (job, school, other help)

4.9 How is the program establishing long-term connections with youth?

4.10 How is the program providing challenging activities with the youths' peer groups?

--Are there leadership development opportunities for youth?

4.11 What after care and monitoring services are given to youth who have been involved in juvenile court?

4.12 What barriers to building partnerships and delivering services are being encountered? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.1, C1.2, C2.1, C2.4, C3.1, C3.2, C3.3.)

Probes:
--Level of City/County Support
--Level and kinds of Business Community Support
--Level of support from the advisory/planning body/partners
--Level of support among the veteran _____(organization) staff:
--Level of support among the new _____ (organization) staff:

4.13 How successful were the efforts to overcome barriers to developing linkages, relationships, and partnerships, and how did the actual partnerships perform? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.1, C1.2, C2.1, C2.4, C3.1, C3.2, C3.3.)

Probes:
--How successful were each of the strategies?
--What accounts for the relative success of each strategy?
--What was the ongoing role of the advisor/planning bodies in overcoming barriers?

4.14 In what ways has the project adapted the principles and strategies of School-to Work into its employment and training programs? (Incorporates DOL question C2.2.)

Probe: Describe how the project adapted these principles.

4.15 How effective are the projects operating in correctional facilities in collaborating with the career One-Stop centers, employer networks, and local school districts to develop curricula and programs (Incorporates DOL question C2.2.)

--Are the youth offenders getting connected to the local One-Stop centers?

--Are the One-Stop centers providing support (child care, transportation, etc.) for eligible project participants?

--Are the youth getting ongoing job placement help through the One-Stops?

4.16 What role are the gang prevention advisory boards playing, and is the composition appropriate? (Incorporates DOL question C1.6.)

Describe:

4.17 How have gang suppression activities established or expanded?

Describe:

4.18 Category 1 and 3 specific: What strategies are being used to engage employers, and what role are they playing to provide the target population with long-term employment? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.4, C3.5.)

Describe:

4.19 Category 1 and 3 specific: What strategies are being used to develop alternative employment-related sentencing and community service options? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.5, C3.6.)

Describe:

4.20 Category 3 specific: How are drop-out and suspension prevention and college- bound efforts being expanded in middle schools and high schools?

Describe:

4.21 Category 1 specific: What strategies are being used to provide community-wide sports and recreational activities for target youth ages 8-17?

Describe:

4.22 Category 1 and 3 specific: Have the Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit options been used in developing job placements?
Describe:

5. Facility Location

Q: Where are facilities located in relation to where the youth reside? Does the location of the facilities give access to and facilitate the recruitment of the target population as program participants?

Data Needs

5.1 Probe: Describe the process for selecting the sites where services are delivered.

5.2 What attention was given to issues of access by the target population?

5.3 Describe the locations serving the target population (Are they clean, new, professional, providing confidential areas, etc.)

5.4 Do the facilities foster a positive attitude among youth served, their parents/caregivers, and peer group members?

5.5 How have the locations facilitated or impeded access to program activities?

5.6 How does the program assure:

--workplace safety

--multiple job experiences

--youth are closely monitored at work sites

--youth are exposed to high quality work sites (jobs with career potential)

6. Project Staffing and Training

Q: What staff have been recruited for the YODP project?

Data Needs

6.1 Provide a list of staff recruited for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project.

6.2 Describe the training and experiences that led to staff being assigned to this project.

6.3 Provide job descriptions, and qualifications used to recruit staff.

6.4 Describe the training that has been provided for each staff member (including subcontractors).

6.5 Describe the degree to which the program staff have been willing to rethink traditional vocational and academic training activities to achieve:

--A common vision for the students' outcomes
--Clear role expectations for each staff person
--Common training for all project staff
--All staff know all the competencies students are expected to acquire
--High standards of skills expectation
--Flexibility in integrating work and school based learning
--Regular opportunities for staff coordination
--Regular student assessment and evaluation

6.6 Describe the behavioral objectives of the training. What attitudes, skills and behaviors do you expect staff to exhibit?

7. Recruitment of the Target Population

Q: What methods are being used for gaining access to, and recruiting, members of the target population as program participants? How responsive have the methods been to the needs of the target population, and how successful are they?

Data Needs

Probe:

7.1 Describe the recruitment strategies for reaching the intended target population.

7.2 Describe how the program enrolls recruited youth and keeps them participating.

7.3 Describe individualized educational or any other assessments used to plan services to target youth in the program.

8. Primary Service Delivery

Q: What are the training, employment, and gang suppression services actually being provided to the intended target population? What is the intensity, duration, fidelity, quality of the services? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.3, C3.4.)

8.1 Describe the content of each service delivered.

Do youth receive:
--training that involves integration of academic, vocational, and social skills?
--work-based training that is well-developed?
--work-based training that involves multiple activities?

Are:
--records kept of youth skills attainment?
--students actively engaged in setting goals, interacting with supervisors and trainers?

Does:
--training link secondary and post-secondary training?
--the program have specific career goal options?

(Collect data; matrix of data)

8.2 Youth status at entry to the program:

Collect youth offender participant records reporting:
--gender
--ethnicity or race
--age
--family status (percentages with family of origin, single on their own, married)
--single parents in the target group (counts and percentages)
--marital status
--number and ages of children
--educational status years completed
--school status (in-school, suspended, dropped out)
--employment status (unemployed, part time job, full time job)

--wage levels of jobs held
--involvement in the criminal justice system (arrested, convicted, confined)

8.3 Data on the intensity and duration and content of the primary services, i.e., fidelity. For each participant who received primary service please describe:

--activities assigned
--the number hours of each activity (hours of participation expected)
--the frequency of each activity (hrs/wk)
--length of program intervention
--degree of participants' attendance

8.4 Describe special job-related efforts:

--getting youth driver's licenses
--getting tatoos removed/hidden
--getting youth work-appropriate clothing

8.5 For each participant please provide data for the following outcomes:

--still in program
--dropped out of program
--placed in long term employment.
--character of employment received
--formal education or training certificates
(diploma, GED, employment certification, etc.)
--no longer a gang member
--recidivism: arrested or incarcerated for new criminal activity
--begun apprenticeships
--joined military
--joined Job Corps
--connected to One-Stop
--continued gang involvement

8.6 How effective have been the gang prevention advisory boards in deterring youth from gang involvement? (Incorporates DOL question C1.6.)

8.7 Describe the outcomes of the gang suppression advisory boards.

8.8 What have been the gang suppression activities?

8.9 How effective have been gang suppression activities?

8.10 Describe the results of the gang suppression activities.

8.11 How has gang activity changed over the course of the project (Data on these are likely to be police department estimates only):
--number of new recruits
--age of new recruits
--total membership
--level and nature of criminal activity
--other

9. Collateral Service Delivery

9.1 Category 1 and 3 Specific: How successful have been strategies used to engage employers to provide the target population with long-term employment? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.4, C3.5.)

Probe:
--How many employers employed graduating participants?

--How many participants were employed by each?

--Which participants were so employed?

9.2 Category 1 and 3 specific: How successful have been strategies used to develop alternative sentencing and community service options? (Incorporates DOL questions C1.5, C3.6.)

Probe: --What guidelines have been adopted?

--How many persons have been adjudicated under them?

--What employment, etc., outcomes have the youths experienced?

9.3 Category 3 specific: How successful have been drop-out, suspension prevention, and college-bound efforts?

Probe: Get data available
--What change in drop-out and suspension rates has occurred during course of the project?

9.4 Category 1 specific: How successful were community-wide sports and recreational activities for youth ages 8-17 incorporated into the projects?

9.5 Category 1 and 3 specific: How successful was the role played by the Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit in developing job placements?

Probe: What types of employers have used these options?

10. Project Continuation

Q: What changes/improvements will be made between now and next February/March? What will these changes require of: partners, youth, others?

10.1 What are the program's continuous improvement mechanisms?

10.2 What steps have been taken to ensure continuation of the integrated services and activities after project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

10.3 Describe the stable funding streams supporting the activities of partners.

10.4 Describe the evaluation benchmarks of the system that are designed into the program structure to justify project continuation.

10.5 Gather data on placements if not captured at Question 8.

Data needs: placements into jobs, military, Job Corps, apprenticeships, etc.

10.6 Describe the local evaluation processes used to assess program effectiveness.

Probe:
--Is the evaluation implemented?
--What are the components of the evaluation?
--Who is responsible for performing the evaluation?
--Who receives the evaluation reports?

Notes about the visit itself:

APPENDIX D

Category I Final Report Summaries

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Denver

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

Denver City and County are a single governmental unit. The economy was strong with an unemployment rate in May 2001 of 3.6%, although the staff of the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) reported that the Employment Services Office was receiving more unemployment insurance claims with the current economic downturn. The economy was diverse, however, with a strong high technology sector; and jobs were still plentiful. The target neighborhoods for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) were gentrifying as housing in the Denver area became more scarce and more expensive. There were reports of lower income families from neighborhoods near downtown being displaced to Denver's suburbs.

The YODP grant was housed in the MOWD, formerly known as the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (MOET). Denver had received a Youth Opportunity (YO) grant in addition to its YODP grant. These grants, plus Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds for youth, have provided the impetus for reorganizing the youth employment office and programs. The MOWD staff devised a Generation Youth 2000 (GY2K) strategy to provide employment training and other assistance to all economically disadvantaged youth living in the 12 city and county enterprise communities. The concept was for each youth to be assessed as to her/his needs and be assigned to services that would best serve him/her within the programs' eligibility requirements. A youth under court supervision, for example, might live in the YODP target neighborhoods and so qualify for YODP support; the youth might also qualify for some services provided through the YO grant or WIA youth funds.

Denver focused its demonstration project on the Barnum, Highlands, Sun Valley, and part of the Westwood neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were adjacent to downtown and were primarily residential with small retail establishments. They were older neighborhoods of single-family dwellings that appeared neat and orderly to the visitor. Interviewees, however, reported that 27% of youth in neighborhoods along the Platte River, of which these are a part, were living in poverty. While the economy remained strong, youth in the target neighborhoods struggled with poverty and high drop-out rates from school.

Fifty-nine percent of project youth were court-referred to Denver Area Youth Services (DAYS); generally they had come from the juvenile justice system as a result of anti-social behaviors, such as substance abuse and truancy. Some youth who referred themselves to the project or had been recruited by staff had been under court supervision at some time. As a result, 64% of project youth had been or were offenders (33% for misdemeanors and 31% for felonies). The staff estimated that 30% of the 1,067 Denver youth under court supervision lived in YODP target neighborhoods. Project staff reported a continuing need to help youth get drug and alcohol interventions and mental health services.

Gang activity was monitored by the Denver Metropolitan Gang Coalition, representatives of area police, courts, schools, employment training, and community-based organizations who coordinated their prevention and intervention strategies. DAYS, the lead community-based organization for the YODP, was a coalition member. DAYS reported that it was to monitor gang membership among YODP youth. Youth did not report gang membership, and it was difficult to distinguish a "gaggle of kids" from a gang. Nevertheless, there had been issues of youth wearing gang colors at the project center, and some youth admitted to gang membership. The MOWD staff reported that gangs seemed more active in spring 2001 compared to recent years. The staff hoped that summer employment and other youth activities would keep gang violence in check during summer 2001.

The project staff offered a gang prevention and suppression curriculum,"Gang Rescue and Support Project"(GRASP), to youth who attended GED classes at the project center. This five-session discussion explored the effects of violence on the youth's lives, their families, and their communities.

The youth were generally younger than 18. Of the 178 participants of record, 72% were between 13 and 17; 42% were either 16 or 17. Seventy-nine percent of participants had earned fewer credits than required to be a high school junior. A major thrust of the YODP effort, therefore, had been to prevent the youth from leaving high school and offering the GED alternative for those who had.

Political support for the project within city and county remained strong. Councilwoman Ramona Martinez met monthly with providers of youth services in her district in southwest Denver. Her efforts have strengthened networks, developed mutual support, and leveraged resources among schools and other service providers.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Denver had accumulated a number of partners interested in delivering employment services to youth through a Kulick grant the city had received. The MOWD staff described how they brought together YODP partners and allowed them to work out the proposal design together, which constituted a departure from the usual method of writing the proposal and circulating it among interested partners for comment. These partnerships have been stable and became more complex when Denver received its Youth Opportunity (YO) grant. There were 34 partners delivering services to youth in spring 2001, including the YODP partners who also delivered services to YO youth.

The relationship between the YODP and Denver schools initially was underdeveloped. The district itself was under transition as one superintendent left, leaving an acting superintendent in place for a year, only to be followed by a superintendent who stayed just one year. The DAYS staff made presentations to administrators of high schools in the target neighborhoods to explain the purpose of the grant and the services it could provide to school youth. As YODP partners

realized that 56% of project youth were high school dropouts and that employment opportunities were slim for youth without a diploma, the project staff made a concerted effort to keep youth in school and to provide GED tutoring to those who had left. The district assumed financial responsibility for teachers of GED classes DAYS offered during spring 2001. As a result, three certified special education teachers and a social worker were hired.

MOWD had seen its role as organizing project partners, training service providers in the "youth coaching" model for working with youth, and bringing the YODP partners together regularly for training and coordination. Any training provided toYO providers and case managers (YO Coach Days) also included YODP providers. The YODP staff also trained YO providers in intensive case management, so benefits have flowed in both directions.

MOWD continued to look for funds to leverage the federal grants Denver received. Some funds had come to the GY200K: the Denver government general fund, federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds, the Rose Fund, and the Annie Casey Foundation's "Building Families" program. For the summer employment program, both subsidized and unsubsidized jobs were being developed through the Public Education-Business Coalition.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

Partnership relationships were stable from the project's beginning. The project started with DAYS as lead partner. DAYS had 27 years' experience training and supervising court-appointed youth on community service and restitution projects. It subcontracted with DenverWorks for soft skills and work readiness training. What DAYS needed to develop was a complete employment training program with job development and placement services. To that, DAYS added GED classes and provided clients access to other support services.

MOWD contracted separately with the Denver Workforce Initiative (DWI) for work readiness assessment tools for both entry-level employees and front-line supervisors. Originally, DWI also would have provided coach mentors from various industries to match with youth in the program. The coach- mentor aspect, however, proved too difficult to implement. DWI provided technical assistance to project staff to develop "circles of support" for those seeking work.

The Community College of Denver (CCD) received a contract from MOWD to provide a connection between the DAYS youth and the CCD Tec West campus where youth were assigned for GED preparation and some vocational education. Non-contractual partners participated as well: law enforcement, schools, criminal justice, and other community-based organizations in the MOWD network.

DAYS had traditionally provided community service and restitution activities for youth assigned alternative sentences; their case management, employment and training, education, anti-gang and crime prevention initiatives, and access to special support services were developed with the YODP grant. DenverWorks provided soft skills training at the DAYS center. The greatest

challenge had been developing an adequate network of industries that could offer youth employment opportunities with advancement potential. The entire youth employment partnership network of MOWD recognized this challenge and planned to focus on enhancing its employer network in 2001-2002.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

DAYS provided the intake, assessment, individual service strategy (ISS) plan development, case management, job development, project record-keeping, initial work experience, GED classes plus enrichment activities, drug counseling, and homework resources and help for those in school. DAYS also operated Family Nights to provide a positive experience for youth and their families; the youth prepared a meal; youth received awards for achievements and families received gift certificates for participating. DAYS became a youth One-Stop center, but other family members also could obtain some employment-related services there.

DAYS had traditionally put all its clients into a supervised work crew for the first six weeks after enrollment, and this work experience component was continued. The work crew experience was a preliminary work-readiness activity (punctuality, industry) and also served as a work-maturity assessment activity (ability to work in a group, accept assignments, work through disagreements, etc.). DW provided more formal work readiness during the sixth week of the work crew experience. The emphasis in delivering service became completing high school equivalency and then moving to job search and placement.

DenverWorks came to the DAYS center to provide its portion of the work readiness. As part of training, on the theme of reaching mountain peaks, trainers took the youth to a wall climbing (simulated rock-face climbing) activity to demonstrate that they could accomplish more than they thought they could. Staff invited males to "Men at Work," a section of their office devoted to men's used apparel, where youth could obtain interviewing and work clothes. Girls were taken to a used clothing store called "Dress for Success."

DWI came to DAYS to train staff in the circles-of-support approach to assisting first-time employees and to learn how to use the "Learning to Work It Out," an instrument to assist first-time employees to be successful in the world of work.

The only part of the Denver program that required youth to participate in activities at another site was placement at Tec West, the Community College of Denver, a personalized computer-based learning program for GED acquisition and career exploration. Tec West was developed as part of the Kulick grant. There an outreach worker tracked the youth and facilitated her/his transition. This same outreach worker also recruited youth for the program from among Tec West students who were working on their GED. For the few youth who aspired to a specific employment field, Community College of Denver also provided specific vocational education.

Some youth qualified for both YO and YODP. If they did, the youth were co-enrolled to receive services from whichever source made the most sense. Some youth moved sequentially from one

program to the other. If a youth lacked the maturity for unsubsidized employment, for example, she/he could be transferred to another employment program to receive more training. Some services funded by one program were made available to youth in other programs without co-enrollment. Job fairs were open to all youth program clients; recreation was paid for from YO funds but made available to youth clients from all programs.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

The DAYS facility in Denver was in gang-neutral territory, and it was accessible by public transportation. The facility was a former one-story warehouse that the city/county refurbished for the project initially and then as a youth One-Stop center with some YO funds. All services except occupational education and some GED classes were held there. It was clean and bright and youth there seemed relaxed and at home. Tec West was a satellite campus of the Community College of Denver. It occupied several suites in an office building at the edge of a residential neighborhood, somewhat away from downtown. It was clean and functionally furnished.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

MOWD hired a staff person to coordinate the project. He was an experienced probation officer with youth offenders. By the middle of the second year, this staff member returned to the Department of Corrections, and MOWD hired a new staff person whose experience had been supervising several half-way houses for returning offenders.

The director and assistant director of the YODP at the DAYS center were responsible for the coordination of services and outreach to youth; both were veteran human service professionals. They hired three case managers and a job developer using YODP funds. All but one of the initial front-line staff members had changed over the course of the project. The second round of case managers and job developers were young college-educated workers who were career testing themselves. Two were hired away by the YO grant that was paying $4,000 per year more than YODP. Most of their replacements and the YODP work crew leaders had worked on and off with DAYS over the years, and only one of the front-line staff persons was hired directly from college. The teachers, substance abuse counselor, and the social worker were all veteran members of their sponsoring organizations. All the staff seemed committed to the youth and expressed satisfaction with their work. Denver Works and the Denver Workforce Initiative did not hire specifically for this project.

Training sessions during the project's second year were all-day long and included sessions on such topics as: recruitment of clients, substance abuse and mental health issues of youth, and leveraging the services within the youth employment network. All sessions were held jointly with the staff and partners of the new YO grant and WIA network. The YODP staff alone had completed training on the Federal Bonding and tax credit programs, the DWI work readiness

instruments, and case management techniques. As noted above, most of the staff were now seasoned professionals.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

In the beginning youth were recruited to the project entirely from the courts; but since the project began, about 41% were referred from other sources, especially youth who wanted or needed to work:

- Youth receiving services recommended the program to their families and friends;
- The new relationship with the school district led to referrals;
- Members of the partnership referred youth; and
- The outreach worker at CCD was a source of recruits.

Case managers admitted that the youth have been difficult to keep engaged. Those under court supervision were better than others about attending; but the tendency among the youth, as a group, was to work until they earned the money they needed for something they wanted and then drop out until they had another money goal. After completing probation, the staff had to work hard to keep the court-referred youth engaged in the process of completing their ISS plan. Case managers continued to work with the youth, and they knew that most would return until they achieved stable employment.

Teachers in the GED program also reported that the motivations among youth varied; some were intensely engaged in preparing for their GED exams, and others less so. Seven had completed the GED since October 2000. All youth reported having had difficulties in school, but several youth have successfully passed the GED exam after only a few months of study. Ability may be an issue with some youth, but clearly not for all.

Project youth were 35% female and 65% male; 14% were parents or pregnant; 4% had a disability, and about the same number were limited in their English language skills. About 10% were considered at high risk of criminal involvement. Ethnically the youth were diverse: 9% White, 4% African- American; 84% Hispanic, 2% Native American; and just over 1% Asian or Pacific Islanders. As mentioned earlier, the youth were generally under age 18, with only 28% 18 or older.

8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

DAYS provided the following services to YODP youth: intake, assessment and individual learning plan development, or an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), work crew experience, and the concomitant DenverWorks work readiness program, GED classes or tutoring and help with homework for those in school, subsidized employment placement, unsubsidized job search, placement and follow-up, and drug abuse counseling, personal counseling, and other supports that were part of the ISS.

Table 1 reports the status of YODP participants in May 2001.

Table 1. Status of Denver YODP Participants in May 2001

OUTCOMES	
Enrollment Goal	300
Enrollment as of May 23,2001	284
Assessment and Case Management	284
Referred for Services	51
Community Service	1
In School	68
Enrolled in GED classes	100
Completed work readiness training	230
Completed Education	7
Job search/placement activity	139
In subsidized employment	222
In unsubsidized employment	60
Exited the program	27
Entered the military	NR
Entered Job Corps	NR
Incarcerated	NR

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Seven youth completed GED studies. One youth began apprenticeship training and four have gone on to community college. The YO partnership provided regular job fairs for all the participants in youth programs.

Case management loads were large, averaging about 70 with 50 active clients for each case worker. Staff were reluctant to turn anyone away, and they gave priority time to those who were newly enrolled or dealing with a crisis situation. Some youth moved away from the center when they finished work readiness and went on to work, but they returned if they needed help with finding a new job or with a personal problem. Some youth were stable, and a monthly phone call was all the follow-up they received.

Case managers went to court with a youth facing a court appearance, both as an advocate for the youth and to assist parents with the court processes. A court appearance, however, could take all day. Case managers gave most of the cases involving court appearances to one case manager, and they arranged to have case managers at the center during busy times.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Part of the GED class experience was the GRASP curriculum to reduce violence. Thirty-four of the GED students also had participated in leadership training. The trainer who took responsibility for the leadership program believed it had been almost a failure because the group did not continue throughout the academic term. The group did, however, mediate an issue of wearing gang colors to school. The youth resisted a dress code, and the leadership group finally worked with their peers to "change their attitude if not their clothing." Students agreed not to use gang-challenging language, wear gang tatoos in a visible place, or speak disrespectfully to students or teachers. The leadership concept was to be piloted again in the fall 2001 academic term.

The YO grant provided recreational opportunities for youth in Denver's enterprise community. DAYS also made arrangements for youth to use recreational facilities in the neighborhood once a week.

A full-time drug counselor was at the YODP center in the grant's second year. She was not paid from YODP funds, but from another grant. She addressed a serious hurdle in the advancement of approximately 24% of YODP youth who had been referred for substance abuse counseling.

The Denver Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network, part of the Juvenile Probation Office, developed an Employment Network Subcommittee as part of its overall goal of improving the health and well-being of youth in custody. The subcommittee was made up of representatives of employment and training providers across Denver who worked with youth. They met monthly and shared their resources. One member, for example, provided suicide prevention training to the YO and YODP staff. The network had received a grant for "Jobs for

Youth" to begin in July 2001 to assess, treat, and refer for employment youth who were both substance abusers and offenders.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

MOWD "blended" its approach to youth employment. Each source of funding was directed to its target group, but the vision, approach (youth coaches), and training were developed in common for all youth programs. The Kulick grant, YODP, and WIA were the main funding sources; but grants were prepared to close gaps and to customize specific service needs, like substance abuse treatment and suicide prevention. The school district was funding the GED classes at DAYS on a per-pupil basis, and that was likely to continue As funding streams came to an end, the staff hoped that it would be able to find alternative sources of funding or transfer youth to another still-active program.

The vision MOWD had for youth employment led to its strategy of training service providers across Denver in a common approach with common expectations. This cadre of trained staff would remain in place regardless of future funding. The YO case managers had been trained in the intensive case management approach that had been needed for YODP youth. Many YO youth were also court-supervised, and MOWD recognized that such case management would be needed for a portion of youth clients receiving services through other programs and in other parts of the county.

Using WIA funds, Denver established seven One-Stop centers, including the youth One-Stop at DAYS. It was unlikely to add any more than the centers at: Speer Boulevard (the headquarters), Community College of Denver (both East and West campuses), and in the Adalia, Valverde, and Quigg-Newton neighborhoods. Not all were full-service centers, and various funds have leveraged the WIA funds. YO funds, for example, developed the computer laboratory at the DAYS One-Stop center that was used during the day for GED classes and in off-hours for neighborhood youth's homework or tutoring support.

The Denver partnership networks were expected to continue after the YODP grant ends. Partners reported that they had been able to leverage their funding by using each other rather than duplicating services. MOWD was committed to providing youth offenders access to all youth services, regardless of funding source. MOWD staff believed that the confluence of YO, YODP, and WIA youth funds gave them a window of time to establish a permanent youth employment strategy and partnership network.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Houston

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

HoustonWorks, USA (HW), received the award for the Youth Offender Demonstration (YODP) grant in Houston, Texas, calling it Project U-Turn. HW delivered work readiness training, placement, support, and follow-up services or brokered or contracted for those services to the residents of Harris County. It operated under the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), the local workforce development council. All employment services supported under HGAC were publicized as "WorkSource," regardless of the sponsoring employment training organization.

Houston's economy was robust and diversified. As with other YODP sites, there were plenty of jobs available for youth who were interested in employment. Many youth in the target neighborhoods, however, lacked the skills to compete for those jobs that offered a liveable wage and had career potential.

HW focused the YODP on the city's north side and fifth wards. Both areas were part of Houston's "Enhanced Enterprise Community," which had received both public and private funds to restore the neighborhoods to the vibrant communities they once were. These neighborhoods, adjacent to the downtown, were bounded by Interstate Highways 10 to the south, 45 to the west and 610 to the north; the fifth ward was the eastern boundary. A major route, Highway 59, bisected the community, separating the fifth ward from the rest of the target area.

The neighborhoods were mostly small, single-family dwellings with one very large public housing project, which the City of Houston was in the process of renovating. Youth in the target neighborhoods were challenged by poverty, and family disruption. The two high schools in the target area, Jefferson Davis and Wheatley, had high dropout rates. The YODP built on the Kulick grant Houston had received, so the needs of neighborhood youth were well-known to the main contractor there, Educational Training Centers, Incorporated (ETC).

There seemed to be a general decline in the number of youth in the target neighborhoods, according to a March 2000 survey reported by the Center for Labor Market Studies in Boston, which performed a demographic study of the enterprise communities. Enrollment at Wheatley High School, for example, dropped from 1,400 in 1995 to about 800 in 2001. The renovation of the large public housing project caused the relocation of many families out of the target area. Even as the apartments came back on line, the families were not returning to the old neighborhood. Despite the reduction in the number of youth in the target area, there were enough youth at-risk of court supervision and adjudicated youth to meet the enrollment expectations of the YODP grant.

A probation officer for the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) reported no reduction in youth crime in the Enhanced Enterprise Community over all, but the crime had moved to the periphery of the target area, north and east. The majority of referrals from the TYC probation officers to the YODP had proved to be ineligible for the program because the youth resided in this peripheral area, not in a YODP target neighborhood.

The TYC sent fewer youth, over the course of the YODP grant, to the privately sponsored residential correctional facility, Gulf Coast Trades (GCT), another main contractor for Project U-Turn. GCT had been the project site for School-to-work programs to prepare incarcerated youth for skilled employment upon their return to the neighborhoods. Judges were making fewer assignments to correctional facilities, however; so the facilities operated by the TYC took priority for residential placements. Only three eligible youth were referred to GCT over a seven-month period when the predicted referral rate of eligible youth to GCT had been about 10 per month.

Mayor Lee P. Brown put the city's anti-gang operation in his office as a way to demonstrate its importance. A staff member of the YODP represented HW at meetings held at the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office (MAGO). MAGO not only facilitated information sharing among service providers to youth offenders or those suspected of gang membership, but it also had funds to support outreach staff working in high-crime neighborhoods.

The reported number of gangs operating in the Houston area had increased proportionately with the increase in the general population. Gang activity in Houston had decreased by 10% in recent years, however, according to the MAGO director. Gang-related homicides and aggravated assault incidents had declined for 1999 and 2000, and the decline continued for the early months of 2001. Drug trafficking increased during this time and arrests for drug possession and trafficking increased as well.

The ethnicity of gang and youth crime activity shifted during this time. African American activity and the number of African American homicide victims declined while the involvement of Hispanic males, particularly new immigrants, increased. There had been a slight increase in the number of female youth involved as well.

No one was sure how much of the gang activity decline could be linked to the concerted effort by the member organizations of MAGO, but MAGO's Violence Reduction Team had designed an intervention that included more intensive monitoring of gang members on parole and probation, closer attention to their conditions of parole and probation with the goal of assisting them to remain successful in meeting those conditions, and focusing attention primarily on criminal gang members rather than on gang members in general. Members of the Police Department's Gang Task Force also had changed their strategy by alerting the Violence Reduction Team if they suspected that gang clashes were likely, instead of waiting for the violence to occur.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Houston had accumulated a number of partners interested in delivering employment services to youth through the Kulick grant the city had received. HW staff described that they brought together the existing and new partners and allowed them to work out the proposal design together. This was a departure from the usual method of having the HW staff write the proposal and circulate it among interested partners for comment.

In Houston, new partners were the Harris County Courts, Texas Youth Commission, MAGO and the police departments; that is, HW had not heretofore worked with the youth offender population. Both the employment and training and the criminal justice partners were pleased to be working together and they found that the partnership was proving mutually beneficial.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

HW contracted with ETC for services to youth residing in the target neighborhoods and with GCT for incarcerated youth from the neighborhoods. Several non-funded partners leveraged YODP grant funds: The Texas Youth Commission paid the residential costs for the youth at GCT, and the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office (MAGO) paid for community intervention specialists who maintained neighborhood contacts, recruited youth for the project, and provided gang prevention activities. With the award of a Youth Opportunity (YO) grant, HW decided that YO would be responsible for in-school youth and Project U-Turn (YODP) would be responsible for out-of-school youth.

ETC and GCT received their contracts from HW only in the summer 2000, so the project was delayed in coming into full operation. Although ETC and GCT were written into the grant proposal, HW had decided that they needed to have a competitive request for proposals before preparing the contracts; it had taken until July-August 2000 to complete the process.

The YO grant also provided the impetus to reorganize the HW youth programs as a whole. The original project manager for Project U-Turn was made assistant director for all youth programs and a former case management supervisor became project manager.

Only partially implemented, the new approach to youth employment was to recognize the eligibility of all Houston youth for services through one or several funding streams: YODP, YO, WIA, and privately funded summer youth employment projects. Each funding stream had restrictions on what services could be offered as well as to whom they could be offered. By completing an expanded enrollment form, the staff determined for which services the applying youth was eligible. A youth's ISS could route her/him through several types of employment training, support services, and employment search and placement options.

Funding was viewed as "following the kid," that is, the youth's needs could be met through a variety of vendors whose qualifications had been vetted as part of the process to become eligible for referrals. The new set of partnerships, referred to as PAYS, included all vendors on the accepted vendor list. A quality assurance function was added to HW to oversee the safety and quality of facilities and services provided through the vendor arrangement.

Representatives of the vendors became the advisory committee for all youth employment programs. Although it was not a WIA youth council, the committee functioned like one. It was, in effect, the project's advisory committee. It did not include parents or youth; the entire representation came from HW and its vendors. By the time of the third evaluation site visit in spring 2001, ETC was not a member of PAYS.

Each vendor submitted a per-capita cost for providing a service, for example, drug abuse counseling services or a work readiness training class. Case managers provided youth with the options available (schedules, locations, etc.), and youth chose the vendor from which he/she would seek service.

This development took ETC by surprise. It had accepted the YODP contract for providing case management, referral, and some direct services to youth offenders, assuming that it would also be receiving a contract for providing less intensive services to YO youth, who were easier to serve. By having responsibility for the Project U-Turn youth and being only one of the employment training options for area youth under YO, the organization believed that it had been put into a very difficult financial position. ETC reported, however, that it was providing services according to its Project U-Turn contract.

Gulf Coast Trades, as mentioned earlier, had a contract to serve incarcerated youth from target neighborhoods. The TYC would have been responsible for their residential expenses as well as for providing the School-to-work and GED preparation during the months of their incarceration (typically 9 months). The GCT contract was based on anticipation of providing employment placement and follow-up services to 100 area youth when they left the facility and returned to their homes and for 12 months after they found employment.

When referrals to GCT were not forthcoming, HW thought it could encourage TYC to transfer eligible youth from one of the TYC facilities to GCT for the last six months of their sentences. TYC needed to keep its own facilities fully subscribed, however, so youth were not released to GCT. HW then made arrangements for GCT to go to the TYC institutions to provide the same services to youth at TYC facilities.

TYC agreed to move all the YODP-eligible youth to one of two facilities, which already held the majority of incarcerated youth who were eligible for Project U-Turn: Hamilton (Bryan, Texas) and Jefferson (Beaumont, Texas). Not fully implemented in spring 2001, the plan would be for GCT to provide a school-to-work curriculum applied to a few occupational fields at these two facilities. TYC agreed to give Project U-Turn youth a pre-employment assessment and to purchase Magellan software for individual learning, aptitude testing, and career exploration.

Funds that GCT had for work readiness and placement would be realigned for GCT to do more aftercare in Houston when the youth returned: providing case management, reducing barriers (such as transportation costs), assisting with job placement and follow-up. GCT had been tested as a model for neighborhood-based services, and this model would be expanded with YODP funding from GCT's existing contract.

The partnership of MAGO, the probation office, the courts, and the police with HW evolved with the planned development of a Juvenile Justice Center slated to be a special youth One-Stop center. The former Casa de los Amigos Clinic already had been identified as a youth One-Stop. And, with funds or in-kind support from MAGO, Weed and Seed, YO, and state juvenile justice grants, it would become a youth employment center with an alternative court, a home base for MAGO outreach staff and for other service providers with a special interest in youth offenders. RIO, TYC's employment and training office, planned to put a worker in the center. The center would serve other youth from the neighborhood as well. The HW staff hoped that Houston Independent School District (HISD) would become more actively engaged with the effort.

The original partnership network for Project U-Turn did not include faith-based and community-based organizations, other than ETC. PAYS included both faith-based organizations and community-based nonprofit organizations and agencies. Through PAYS, for example, recreational services would become available for U-Turn youth–services not previously available.

While the YODP grant was awarded directly to HW, the YO grant Houston received was awarded to HGAC, making HGAC more active in the delivery of youth employment services in Houston. In effect, HGAC, the area workforce development council, became another partner in the planning and implementing of youth employment services.

The Unified School District planned to establish a recognized charter school at ETC in August 2001 and pay for the certified teachers. The school would focus on youth two grades behind their age-appropriate school level. The goal would be to assist the youth in catching up in order to return to traditional school or to complete high school through the existing GED preparation at ETC. Project U-Turn youth would be eligible for this charter school.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

Houston basically had two programs, one through ETC for youth at home and Gulf Coast Trades for incarcerated youth. At ETC, youth were provided intake and assessment as part of an extensive application process. The youth were assisted in preparing a personal plan, one that included education, community service, and support services, such as substance abuse intervention, assistance with child care or transportation. ETC operated a GED preparation class during the day, and work readiness and life skills assistance were offered as needed. ETC provided job development, placement, and follow-up for 90 days. Should a youth lose a job, the placement process and follow-up began again for another 90 days.

For youth who expressed an interest in a particular occupation, HW arranged courses, generally through the Houston Community College. Nine youth earned a certificate for laying fiber optic cable and had found work placements directly from the program at $7.50 an hour plus benefits. One youth wanted machinist training and earned a certificate through the Texas Engineering Extension (TEEX) in Houston. Most youth did not receive vocational education before being advanced to the job search phase of the program.

The Gulf Coast Trades operation was a thorough going school-to-work program for incarcerated youth. The GCT provided all the work readiness services listed earlier, but these skills and services were embedded in a program of academic preparation and vocational education provided through The Raven School, a recognized alternative school in the New Waverly School District. Youth spent 2.5 hours each day in academic preparation and 5.5 hours in vocational education shops: auto mechanic, culinary, building maintenance, masonry, and computer applications. Youth refurbished, helped construct, and maintained all the GCT buildings. Youth could move on to YouthBuild, and GCT had completed four homes and planned to sell them for more land and materials. Service learning and leadership opportunities were part of the program. For youth approaching their 18th birthday, and who did not have a stable home to return to, GCT provided an independent living program to help them begin life on their own after incarceration. The program helped them find an apartment and a car. It also assisted them in finding employment back in the Houston neighborhood, and provided follow-up services to them for a year after they were hired.

As mentioned earlier, only three youth benefited from this program over a seven-month period. The new plan called for GCT to offer the occupation-based school-to-work program services directly to two TYC-supervised youth in TYC facilities. With the difficulty of developing the hands-on training bays, only two or three occupations would be featured at the TYC facilities, compared to the six at GCT. Academic preparation would be provided by the TYC school facilities, and GCT would provide the follow-up and job placement services to the youth returning to the target neighborhoods.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

HW, itself, was in a large commercial office building in downtown Houston; but the clients rarely needed to come there. Houston's ETC was in what appeared to be a renovated professional office; it was clean, bright and airy. There were offices and classrooms where GED classes were taught. The location was both gang-neutral and accessible. GCT was about an hour from Houston to the north and sufficiently far off the main highway that the youth would not be encouraged to walk home. It was set in a stand of pine trees that was originally a Jobs Corps site. There were multiple modular-type buildings for offices, residences, classrooms and shops. There were no towers, fences, or guns.

Houston had plans to build or refurbish four buildings as youth One-Stop centers; all were in the general YODP target area. These One-Stop centers would be built with funds from multiple

sources, but primarily from the YO grant. One of these centers was operational and was part of a large multi-use community center. Casa de los Amigos would be another site, but its repairs had been delayed by the presence of asbestos. This building, when renovated, would be a juvenile justice center with multiple services for youth offenders and youth at risk of criminal activity. The other sites were not ready by spring 2001.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

The original project manager for Project U-Turn had been a veteran member of the HW staff who became the new assistant director for Youth Programs at HW. The new project manager had been a case manager supervisor for Project U-Turn. He was an experienced youth development specialist and had worked with youth in mental health settings. He served as a liaison between Project U-Turn and the other HW projects under the new youth employment strategy, and he represented the project on MAGO.

Two HW staff members were hired by HW, one an African American male with extensive experience in law enforcement and parole. The other was a Latina case worker with employment training background. Both were located in the ETC office while the new youth One-Stop centers were readied. They supervised the case management of youth at ETC and managed youth who remained employed beyond 90 days, at which time they completed their client status with ETC.

HW offered a regular program of staff training, and a certain number of hours were required of all employees. The only project level training had occurred through the technical assistance consultants referred to the site, Linda Reed on developing project organization (common terms, protocols, and procedures) and Tom English on strengthening gang suppression activity. Linda Reed's workshop was intended to help the cross-agency team develop a common vision for the project. Both reported that the training was well-received.

ETC used veteran staff members for management and to provide specialized services, such as gang intervention and substance abuse. It hired several case managers who served Project U-Turn youth as well as others. The GED teachers were funded from other sources.

It was ETC's philosophy that all staff needed to understand the work of the others on the team; the staff was cross-trained and met weekly to review the project. The ETC staff was trained at the HW Academy for proper eligibility determination and for completing the HW enrollment form. GCT used existing staff for their project U-Turn services, and the three youth referred to GCT were mingled with the other youth at the facility.

PAYS also provided a means to develop expertise among participating agencies. At their monthly meetings, the partner representatives heard from police officers, parole officers, and MAGO leaders. Such activities strengthened all the participating agencies' ability to work with the youth offender population.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Recruiting youth had been limited by the general delay in contracting for services. Through summer 2000, HW received nine referrals from the community-based organization, Non-Custodial Fathers. When contracts were signed, ETC and GCT moved aggressively to meet their contractual service load of 500 youth: 100 at GCT and 400 at ETC.

GCT contacted TYC directly to get lists of youth to check for eligibility.. Given TYC's need to keep its facilities fully enrolled, only three youth were referred successfully to GCT. As described earlier, GCT planned work with TYC to provide services to incarcerated youth directly.

ETC contacted the "Dropout Recovery" office of HISD for a list of names of youth who had dropped out of school or who were returning from San Marcos, a boot camp. Staff attended job fairs and sent flyers to persons on the HISD lists; staff attended neighborhood events and maintained contacts with neighborhood youth.

ETC contacted the local probation office and the court with whom it had worked for years on the community service assignment parts of alternative sentences. It was trying to strengthen those relationships as a recruiting mechanism for the project. They knew that 120 eligible youth had returned from incarceration at a TYC facility, but the probation officers were not referring the youth to ETC. Part of continuing conversations with the TYC leadership led to an agreement that TYC would require probation officers to make referrals to U-Turn. The staff judged that the most effective recruitment strategies up to spring 2001 was word of mouth. Some youth had walked into the center, hearing that ETC would help them find jobs. ETC staff did not believe that it would have difficulty in serving the 400 youth envisioned by the contract.

Project 17 was a local effort to provide intensive services to youth returning from incarceration who were 17 years old. Knowing that if they got into further trouble they would be tried as adults, the city was trying to forestall continuing criminal activity. The list of Project 17 youth was being reviewed for eligibility under the YODP guidelines as a recruitment effort and way to leverage services across programs.

8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Both Houston's ETC and GCT used an extensive application and assessment process. Each youth was assisted in developing a personal plan. Education and work readiness training were always a part of the plan. Both academic and vocational education were required by GCT.

Developing a project database had been delayed by the process of moving to a Texas-wide information reporting system for the WIA program. When the system was in place, YODP was

not a category in the system so records continued to be kept separately by partners and reported to the project manager monthly. Table 1 reports the statistics gathered by the current information reporting system. It reports the eligibility of youth for both YO and U-Turn clients. The services reported in the table, however, are for YO and U-Turn co-enrollees only because the system did not track Project U-Turn. Services delivered are understated because the 33 U-Turn clients were not included in the service delivery database.

Table 1. Project U-Turn Status as of June 14, 2001

OUTCOMES	
Enrollment Goals	500
Enrollment: 81 YO + 33 YODP	114
Case Management/Assessment	114
Referred for Service	25*
Community service	0
In School	0
Enrolled in GED Classes	35*
Completed Work Readiness Training	30*
Completed Education	5*
Job Search/Placement Activity	NR
In Subsidized Employment	0*
In unsubsidized Employment	11*
Exited the Program	NR
Entered the Military	NR
Entered Job Corps	NR
Incarcerated	NR

* Refers to co-enrolled youth only.

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9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Through PAYS, Project U-Turn clients were able to access a wide variety of collateral services. Teen parents, for example, could be referred to St. Luke's (Episcopal) or Catholic Charities for assistance; youth needing substance abuse intervention could receive a voucher to exchange for services. The new community center housing a youth One-Stop center also included recreation and arts facilities and programs in which the youth could participate without cost.

Clients often were helped to find transportation. Work clothing expenses were paid for with Project U-Turn funds. Clients who were parents were assisted with child care while they completed their individual programs or as they were starting employment.

GED classes were available through ETC, but were funded through other sources. For the few youth who asked for specific vocational education certification, the project paid for tuition and other fees.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

HW conceived PAYS (Partnership for At-risk Youth Strategies), a city-wide strategy for youth employment using the funding from its YO grant and other sources. Four permanent youth One-Stop centers were envisioned as part of that strategy, and one of them was in operation. The staff of Project U-Turn was expected to be assigned to these One-Stop centers after the YODP grant so that experienced staff would be available to youth offenders in each of the target neighborhoods.

The new vendor system appeared more flexible and more sustainable than the former practice of contracting out to one agency for varieties of service and oversight activities. HW staff believed that it would be better served by using multiply funded vendors with on-going programs rather than developing dependent relationships with a few vendors.

HW staff anticipated that it would continue to prepare proposals for funding the youth offender employment activities. The PAYS partnership was also expected to prepare proposals as a collaborative effort.

The pattern of co-enrolling youth in several programs, based on eligibility, was expected to continue to leverage formula funds, such as WIA and some juvenile justice grants funding, as well as to make better use of YO funding. The expanding nature of the PAYS network was also seen as a way to leverage services without exchanging funds. The Boy Scouts have been offered space in the youth One-Stops, rather than funds. The Scouts would bring another set of activities to project participants without an expenditure of project funds.

In the judgement of several Project U-Turn staff members, the continuing allocation of state juvenile justice funds for employment and training depended on the ability to demonstrate that Project U-Turn and its ancillary supports would reduce recidivism. State RIO employees noted that 60% of the youth returning to the court system were unemployed. The state planned to work more closely with the project staff to assist youth returning to Houston from boot camp to enroll in Project U-Turn. Staff would meet with youth before their release. With U-Turn services, plus the specialized aftercare services (mental health, gang reduction, drug treatment and intensive supervision), the state hoped that recidivism could be reduced.

The intensive case management would probably be the most vulnerable service, if the YODP staff cannot secure new grant funds. The typical size of case loads would prevent management of clients, yet partnerships will likely continue.

The partners had identified common interests and ways to leverage each other's resources. The common stakes for all the partners were high enough for them to continue the collaboration and to find the means to do so. HW had used the collaborative model as the basis for its reorganization.

Once grant funding ends, HW plans to remove the restriction to youth offender services based on neighborhood lines. The experience with demographic shifts demonstrated that the approach needs the flexibility to move services to youth to where they were most needed.

Houston was a resource-rich site that had been frustrated in its efforts to put Project U-Turn on an operational footing as it juggled the larger shifts in organizational structure, staffing and strategies. HW seemed to have chosen strong partners who were energetic in making the project successful, and it had moved to a new partnership structure that provided access to a broader range of services for youth. The project had not yet had time to demonstrate the effectiveness of its approach or of its services.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Philadelphia

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

Philadelphia's Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) was awarded to the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC), formerly the Philadelphia Private Industry Council. The city's YODP originally was named "Learn and Earn;" it was subsequently renamed "Youth Connect." The project evolved considerably from its initial design, including youth it planned to serve and the services it planned to offer.

Philadelphia's economy was strong and diversified, but the situation for under-educated youth was very difficult. Job openings at good wages demanded more skills than many inner-city youth had. Many entry-level jobs with career potential for which these youth were eligible were in the suburbs. But most youth lacked transportation to reach them.

Philadelphia reported youth arrests at 8,900 in 1999, 400 more than the previous three years. There were typically 5,000 youth a year under court supervision, with another 1,000 returned to court on bench warrants; 250 youth were generally referred to court for abuse and neglect. About 2,500 of convicted youth received alternative sentences; these were judged to be a good fit for the YODP.

A major concern for the Juvenile Court staff had been the lack of good aftercare. There were 2,000 youth per year released to aftercare. Before their release, many had received good educational programs at the facilities where they had been incarcerated. When they came back, however, they often had not received meaningful aftercare. From studies done by the court, most youth sent to school on their return to the community never arrived for class or dropped out after a few days. The court estimated that fewer than 10% of youth returning from incarceration completed high school. Typically they returned to criminal activity.

Originally, the PWDC passed the YODP funds to the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) system for the Communities in Schools (CIS) and to the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN). Both of these are nonprofit organizations that offered non-teaching services to youth in the school district. The SDP focused its Youth Offender program on four high schools, one in West Philadelphia and three in North Philadelphia.

Staff at the school district's Central Discipline Office assigned youth returning from incarceration or referred to the office for disciplinary infractions whom they thought would benefit from Youth Connection services. They were referred to one of two in-school alternative classrooms in these four schools.

One alternative classroom called TOPS (Transitional Opportunities Promoting Success) offered youth, who were under 18 years of age and who had earned fewer than 10 credits toward their high school diplomas, a standard high school curriculum in a self-contained classroom. The other, called Twilight classes, was offered to youth over 18 who had at least 10 credits toward graduation. Through its Community-in-Schools (CIS) organization, the SDP also offered some job development and work readiness training services.

Several limitations about this arrangement surfaced during the project's first year. Youth referred by the courts rarely arrived in the TOPS and Twilight classes. CIS, lacking work readiness and job development experience, was unable to prepare youth effectively for work. The schools were unprepared to provide for youth during the summer months when schools were not in session. One partner, who was responsible for offering recreational and other support services, did not provide them; and PWDC was responsible for a project it knew little about and over which it could exert little control or oversight.

Early in the project's second year, PWDC hired a project manager who oversaw the entire operation and began an information reporting system to track the progress of project participants. The SDP continued to offer the TOPS and Twilight classes in the four designated schools, but a new organization with job development and employment training experience was contracted to provide these services.

The Philadelphia Family Court hired a probation officer to ensure that youth it had referred to the project actually participated in it. The main limitations of this arrangement were that the employment training and job development contractor did not perform this role, and arrangements for youth through the summer were lacking.

In the third iteration of the program model, PWDC took over responsibility for case management, work readiness training, placement and follow-up. PWDC contracted with two community-based organizations to work with youth participants. These organizations were Aspira and the Philadelphia Anti-Violence/Anti-Gang Network (PAAN).

The SDP became able to assign school-referred and court-referred youth to the TOPS or Twilight classes in whichever of the 22 comprehensive high schools was best for the youth. Youth who had dropped out of high school, or who needed only a few credits to graduate, were referred to the Adult Evening Program at the Community College of Philadelphia or its extension at Edison High School to earn their diploma or prepare for the GED exams.

Aspira, an organization founded to provide academic, counseling and leadership support to Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youth and their parents, provided counseling, work readiness training, internships, and summer work experiences for project youth. PAAN had extensive experience with court-supervised and gang-involved African American youth. And, it provided a computer-based learning program for youth at risk of dropping out of school, gang intervention activities, a boys support program ("Gifted Young Men"), and other outreach and advocacy activities for gang-involved youth or youth at risk of joining gangs.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Philadelphia's proposal was written by a school district staff member, who had no further connection to the plan once it was submitted. Because it needed to be submitted through an employment and training agency, the then-called Philadelphia Private Industry Council (PIC), prepared the proposal. The pattern in Philadelphia had been that all youth employment and training funds received through the PIC were turned over to the SDP for implementation, so it had not developed in-house expertise on youth employment. The SDP did not have an established operating relationship with either the courts or police.

When the project was funded, principals of the four high schools named in the proposal met and redesigned the project. Initially the plan had been to establish an academy for returning youth offenders with special services and supports, as well as the high school curriculum. The four principals funded, instead, TOPS and Twilight classrooms in their high schools as part of their drop-out prevention program. Some youth may have been returning from incarceration, but the classrooms were available for any youth being reassigned through the school district's Central Discipline Office or assigned to them by the principals themselves.

PWDC had assumed an active leadership role for the project by fall 2000. It hired a project manager, and it assumed responsibility for case management, youth monitoring, some work readiness training and some job placement by winter 2001. CIS continued to pay for four TOPS teachers until the end of May 2001. Financial arrangements between the project and SDP for the Twilight teachers had never been finalized in a contract. PWDC contracted with Aspira and PAAN, an operating unit of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, during winter 2001.

Until its second year, the project lacked an operating relationship with the court and probation office. Family Court then hired a project coordinator with project funds, a former probation officer, to connect the YODP-funded classrooms to its Probation Department. After presentations to probation officers and other Family Court staff, more youth were referred to Youth Connect for project services. The project coordinator monitored youth attendance at school and at work placements for several months before illness caused her to take an extended leave of absence.

PWDC formed a 25-member advisory council in spring 2001. The council included representatives from Aspira, the Defender Association of Philadelphia, Family Court (both judges and professional staff), Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, Juvenile Defenders Office, PAAN, Philadelphia Safe and Sound, Red Cross, SDP, Temple University, and Urban Works.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

The main arrangements for Youth Connect were initially through the city's school district. But over the life of the project PWDC assumed the major role for both oversight and service delivery.

The main contractor initially was Communities-in-Schools (CIS), a 501-(c)-3 nonprofit agency that provided non-teaching services to the SDP. The school unions did not have rules about the hiring and use of non-teaching personnel, and CIS was established to provide educationally related services to the school district that were not covered by union agreement. When CIS's roles and responsibilities became unclear in spring 2000 PWDC took on responsibilities for project management.

PWDC had contracted with Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) during the project's second year to provide case management, work readiness training, job development, placement and follow-up. By moving work readiness and employment training responsibilities from CIS to EDSI, the staff intended to access employer networks, work readiness curriculum, and career development data bases that CIS lacked. EDSI had received several such contracts at one time, however; and proved unable to devote the staff to the YODP as agreed upon. PWDC subsequently hired four case managers and a job developer who assumed responsibility for these tasks.

PWDC had a contract with the Family Court for a project coordinator, a probation officer responsible to connect youth with the program. She was to be the primary case manager for Youth Connect. As part of her responsibilities, she established eligibility of project participants and she followed up on non-attendance and other problems that occurred between the youth and service providers. Her case management and liaison responsibilities were assumed by PWDC case workers during her extended absence from work.

PWDC also had intended to contract with Safe and Sound of Philadelphia for recreational and other support services for project participants. Since Safe and Sound did not perform these activities in the project's first year, PWDC began a process of finding these resources within the city departments. But these support services were still not available to the participants through the project by spring 2001. Safe and Sound was also intended to convene the advisory council for the project, but PWDC subsequently performed this task as well.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

The YODP provided: intake, assessment, referral to academic programs, work readiness training, job search and placement, some work experience opportunities and some mentoring

opportunities. Which organization offered these services varied over the project's history. Providing work readiness and job placement services had been the most difficult to implement consistently. Special supports, such as driver's education classes and transportation passes, were also available. PWDC initiated an incentive program, rewards for consistent attendance at school or work.

PWDC eventually provided all intake and enrollment processing, regardless of the recruiting organization. Youth referred to the SDP for TOPS or Twilight classes were in formal classroom settings, and the school district's standards determined the assessment, curriculum, instruction, and schedule.

Formal work readiness training was shared by PWDC and Aspira. Aspira also provided work experiences and community service opportunities while PWDC provided unsubsidized job search and placement services. Aspira developed 200 summer job placements, not enough for the number of interested youth; but the Youth Connect would have priority in getting one of these slots. PAAN provided mentoring, anger management and mediation training at Aspira. It made recreational opportunities and neighborhood "Peace Fairs" available to youth in neighborhoods near their office.

Case managers met with youth alone or in groups and attempted to meet with families in their homes. Some youth, however, were met in the courthouse or in a library near their homes. Job Fairs were generally at PWDC; the job developer attempted to match youth interests and job opportunities.

PWDC was implementing ADVOCIT, an information reporting system that provides consistent data and reports for all its programs. Implementation, however, was only partially complete in spring 2001. Records from the project's first year were not available, although some youth in the PWDC database were from the first year's recruiting. The school district kept traditional records according to SDP standards, but it did not track participation, grades or graduation rates of Youth Connect participants.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

PWDC was in the heart of downtown Philadelphia at the One Penn Central Building. It was accessible by public transportation from all parts of the city. PWDC operations occupied several floors in this building; it was simply and functionally furnished.

Aspira was in a newly renovated school building where it operated a charter school that went as far as the sixth grade during the 2000-2001 academic year. The building was bright and airy, full of children's art work and bright posters. It was in a neighborhood of residences and small businesses, many with signs in the Spanish language.

PAAN was in a one-story, renovated, former manufacturing plant in a neighborhood of neglected and abandoned manufacturing plants. It was near residential neighborhoods from which youth it served came. Its offices were bright, welcoming and functionally furnished.

Family Court was in the city's main courthouse, which was built in the grand style that included marble floors, staircases, and large murals. It was an older building with small and simply furnished offices.

The four schools to which youth were originally referred were all well-designed and sturdily built. They were in neighborhoods with substantial gang activity, which discouraged attendance by youth from other parts of the city. Youth participating in the project eventually were referred to any one of the city's 22 comprehensive high schools or to the Adult Evening Program at Edison High School or the Community College of Philadelphia. There were also night classes offered at Ben Franklin High School under contract with the community college.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

PWDC hired four case managers and a job developer. All were experienced professionals with four of the five years of experience in case management or job development. One case manager supervised the service delivery team. She answered directly to the project manager who reported to the head of PWDC's youth programs. The project manager was hired from another Philadelphia organization with goals and activities similar to those of Youth Connect. While the service delivery team met to coordinate their work and to report to their supervisors, the team did not receive formal training. Project partners also coordinated their work, but there was not a cross-partner training program in place.

CIS arranged for certified high school teachers to move from their regular teaching schedules at the four target high schools into either TOPS or Twilight classrooms. TOPS teachers taught the youth all day in self-contained classrooms; the materials they used was based on the standard SDP curriculum. Twilight teachers, who had a full class-load in the regular schedule, taught in the after-school program, which covered four quarters during the regular school term. Teachers prepared Twilight courses as six-week modules in their subject areas. The curriculum met SDP requirements for graduation. There was continuing discussion of the difficulty in orienting these teachers to the needs of the target population.

Aspira and PAAN did not hire anyone for the Youth Connect project. The staff of Aspira, both men and women, spoke both English and Spanish; the staff of PAAN consisted primarily of African American men.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Youth were recruited mainly from Family Court and Aspira. A PWDC case manager spent every Wednesday at Family Court to connect with youth who were assigned to the project as an

alternative sentence. Youth who came to Aspira for assistance were referred to PWDC for enrollment. Each day one case manager was assigned to handle telephone referrals, and generally that day's intake became part of the case manager's case load.

Enrollment grew significantly once PWDC case managers and the project coordinator from Family Court were hired. Enrollment increased from 160 participants in October 2000 to 535 in May 2001. Case loads for managers were nominally high, although active case loads were about 30 each. Youth who failed to attend project activities and whom case managers were unable to contact were dropped from the project. Youth who were re-incarcerated also were dropped. All youth remained on project rosters, however.

8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Table 1 reports the status of Youth Connect participants as of June 2001. The ADVOCIT information reporting system reported only basic information, such as, name, social security number, school attending, ethnicity, age, address, parole officer's name, and case manager's name. The data in Table 1 are from this report or from case worker and job developer reports.

The 286 youth who exited the program were youth who completed an application, but then declined services. Aspira subsidized summer employment was to begin in summer 2001; there was no record of other subsidized employment.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Case managers described their roles as advocates for project youth and their families. They attended court hearings with them, visited their homes, were contacted by probation officers, and contacted other service providers.

One Family Court judge assigned youth specific tasks, such as opening a bank account, depositing 25% of weekly wages into the account, bringing the bank account deposit book for court appearances, and writing an essay about the youth's goals and a "Plan B" in case goals were not achievable. The PWDC staff planned to develop a parallel system for non-court-involved youth with the Philadelphia Credit Union.

Table 1. Youth Connect Status as of June 1, 2001

OUTCOMES	
Enrollment Goals	320
Enrollment as of June 1, 2001	535
Case Management/Assessment	452
Referred for Services	47*
Community Service	NR
In School	397
Enrolled in GED classes	NR
Completed Work Readiness Training	184
Completed Education	NR
Job search/placement activity	200
In subsidized employment	NR
In unsubsidized employment	30
Exited the program	286
Entered the military	0
Enter Job Corps	NR
Incarcerated	16

The PWDC staff initiated an incentive system. If the youth brought a pay stub after a month of working for the same employer, the youth received a month's "Transpass" that permitted travel on any public conveyance for a month. PWDC planned to make a deposit in the Credit Union for any youth who was willing to save part of his/her earnings.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

PWDC retained sufficient unexpended funds to continue operating for 9-12 months after the end of the project on May 31, 2001. WIA funds for youth have been passed directly to the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), and there were no immediate plans to reconsider this allocation. PWDC did not foresee a collaboration with the school district, even though it could offer its expertise in job placement and its network of employers interested in hiring youth.

PWDC policy held that services for youth should be delivered in neighborhoods and not directly through the PWDC. The One-Stop center at PWDC was for adults, and the five planned satellites were to go into community centers and churches in key neighborhoods. Some work readiness services might be available to youth at a satellite center.

Staff believed that the sources of future funds would need to come from grants or organizations related to the court. The advisory committee was established partly in hope that the court would recognize the particular niche Youth Connect filled.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Richmond, CA

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

The Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) was awarded to RichmondWorks, the City of Richmond Office of Employment Training, which was called Youth Economic Employment Service (YEES). Richmond, the largest city in Contra Costa County, California, and part of a region called the East Bay, was a city of almost 94,000 residents and 35,000 households. It was the smallest of the Category 1 sites.

Richmond is geographically isolated from surrounding cities; it is on a peninsula separating San Francisco and San Pablo Bays; Interstate Highway 80 separates it from the rest of Contra Costa County. During World War II, Richmond attracted workers from all over the country to work in the shipyards where "Liberty" ships were built. After the war, the shipyards were closed and the local economy struggled for years to recover. Hilltop Mall, a major regional shopping center, "sucked the last few retail stores out of downtown Richmond," according to one Richmond worker. Chevron and local, state, and federal governments provided most of the employment within Richmond itself.

Richmond is, however, re-gentrifying. In recent years the burgeoning economy of San Francisco, Oakland, and Emeryville (East Bay center of biotechnology firms) brought both new industry and new residents to the city. Richmond has 32 miles of beautiful shoreline, and developers are building high-priced housing and boat marinas to take advantage of the beautiful water and bay vistas. These sections are somewhat isolated from the rest of city, and the orientation of the new residents is to friends and jobs away from the city. This seemed to be in contrast to the tightly knit community in Richmond's long-established neighborhoods.

The city is ethnically mixed: 44% African-American, 14% Hispanic, 36% White, 12% Asian and Pacific Islander. The African American community dates back to the 1940s when many families came from southwest Louisiana to form generations of strong neighborhood links.

In 2001, finding jobs in Richmond was not a problem; there was more work than the project had youth to fill. Employers were open to hiring YEES youth once they were deemed work ready. A generation of unionized construction workers was approaching retirement age, and the technology industry that was fueling the growth in the East Bay was looking for employees. The service sector in the region also was strong, so there were low-skill as well as high-skill openings. Transportation was a problem for youth in North Richmond, which was less well served by the public transit systems.

The city's neighborhoods were primarily well-kept single-family homes. The YODP target population, however, lived in multi-family residences; some were public housing projects and some were private apartment complexes. The public housing complexes were new or being refurbished, and the other apartments were well-maintained and pleasant in appearance.

YEES originally targeted neighborhoods in North Richmond to complement the Safe Futures grant activity in South Richmond. North Richmond was marked by poverty, high rates of high school dropouts, family instability, and homelessness. Over the course of the project, however, YODP youth came from all over the city.

The county had experienced a reduction in violent youth crime, as had much of the nation. The target neighborhood that proved to have the deepest problems was North Richmond. Part of North Richmond was in the city and part was an unincorporated area of the county. The sheriff had to drive through the city to get to the county portion, and the area was out-of-the-way for city police as well. Staff reported few regular patrols by area police. Male social workers reported that it was a dangerous area for them to penetrate and that new male case workers needed to be introduced to males on key street corners by someone who was trusted before they attempted to go into the neighborhood to recruit youth for YEES.

The youth culture also was an inhibiting factor. Staff reported that some youth were prisoners of the area in which they lived, especially in North Richmond. Staff believed that they wanted to "get out of the life;" they wanted to take jobs outside the city or neighborhood, but that they were socialized to patterns of their neighborhood. Staff reported that North Richmond youth who enrolled in YEES had more problems adjusting. In general, their attention span was too short to focus on learning and work activities; and they were proving to be the hardest to place in jobs.

Work readiness was a key employment problem, and project administrators reported feeling pressured to bring participants to a level of work readiness faster than was possible. A strong welfare-to-work program brought older economically disadvantaged residents into entry-level positions in the local workforce. Employers also were finding that in general they were more stable, work ready, and eager to learn than many youth.

Many employers needed workers, however, and they often were not asking if the youth had been in trouble. What they did want to know was if the youth would show up on time, work consistently, and display a good attitude. There were also educational problems for youth who seriously wanted to work. Employers at the nearby Hilltop Mall held a forum for Christmas employment. Richmond's Office for Employment and Training, youth division, YouthWorks, sent them some youth who did not read well. As a result, the employers sent them back with the report that they were good kids, but they could not do the job.

Political support was strong for the project. The mayor, council, Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and the WIB youth council were very interested in youth employment. Community-based organizations (CBOs) also were engaged with the project and wanted to expand the possibilities. Schools participated by referring youth to the project and by accommodating out-of-school youth at the Adult School that operated at the Sierra School.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Interested CBOs planned the YEES project. The City of Richmond called its partnership an "old wealth" partnership because North Richmond Youth Services Bureau (YSB) and Opportunity West (OW) had worked together over the years. YSB focused on tutoring and support activities for youth offenders and other disadvantaged youth in North Richmond; OW focused on community restitution and case management of youth in alternative sentencing programs. They had worked together on the Safe Futures grant project, too. The new tie for this partnership was with the city's Employment and Training Office, RichmondWorks (RW). The effort was to provide the transition of youth into steady employment. Intensive case management and other services were designed to facilitate that. The YODP-funded proposal was written by YSB and OW, and RichmondWorks submitted it.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

The original YEES partnership consisted of nine partners:

- RichmondWorks (RW) and its youth arm, YouthWorks,
- Youth Services Bureau (YSB),
- Opportunity West (OW),
- Community Youth Council for Leadership Education (CYCLE),
- International Institute of the East Bay (IIEB),
- Literacy for Every Adult (LEAP),
- Police Activity League (PAL),
- The North Richmond Neighborhood House (NH),
- The Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and
- YouthBuild.

The original intent of the YODP partnership arrangement was that each partner would be responsible for its own part of the service delivery functions. In addition, primary case managers were to ensure that youth received the planned services from the various service providers. During the first year, however, some partners were not delivering their services according to

their contracts, and it became clear that none of the CBOs wanted to take responsibility for those who were not performing. In April 2000, RichmondWorks took over responsibility for YEES and realigned the partnership, keeping for itself several service responsibilities formerly contracted out.

During the project's second year, YSB, Opportunity West, Neighborhood House, CYCLE, PAL, LEAP, and YouthBuild received contracts to continue YEES activities. All the contracts, except YSB, had been cut by 20% to pay for case managers the city had hired. The Chamber of Commerce and the International Institute of the East Bay did not continue in the second year. The chamber's role had been to place youth in unsubsidized employment, but there were no youth ready for the jobs. The IIEB had not delivered any of the agreed upon services. During the second year, neither CYCLE nor PAL offered services. The lead person on the project at CYCLE left the organization and was not replaced. The lead teacher at PAL was limited by an on-going physical ailment, and the new PAL building was not ready for occupancy.

During the project's second year, YouthWorks, the youth employment arm of RichmondWorks, took on responsibility for recruiting, case management, work readiness, job development, job placement and follow-up services to most clients. YSB continued with case management, tutoring and support of first-year clients and of older youth who were more seriously involved with the court. OW activity was limited to community restitution workshops and it was no longer responsible for placing youth in subsidized employment. Neighborhood House had not taken on the case management functions intended during the first year, but took on a case load of 15 clients in the second year, including several from North Richmond where its headquarters was located.

The Literacy for Every Adult Project (LEAP) was an arm of the city, partially funded by RichmondWorks and partially by the Richmond Library. LEAP continued to provide literacy services to youth too old or unwilling to return to school. YouthBuild continued to provide vocational education in the construction trades and GED preparation to a small number of project youth.

The strengthened relationship with the West Contra Costa School District had led to a link with the Sierra Adult School. The school provided an experienced teacher to assist YEES youth in preparing for the GED; she participated on a voucher system that paid a stipend for each referred youth.

The city reported that it wished it had not had to take over operation of the project, but it found that contracts had not been observed and services had not been delivered. The leadership of RichmondWorks believed that the current structure of the program was sustainable, and that the CBOs may stay engaged through a new voucher program for ancillary services. By keeping the program centered in the city, the city would have the reports of all youth and services to which they had been assigned in a standard format that was also compatible with WIA reporting requirements.

The community-based partners were angry, but resigned. They believed that the youth needed more help from organizations that operated in their neighborhoods, and that they would need to look for other grant funds to continue their work. YSB had submitted its proposal to be a provider under the new voucher system, and YouthBuild had submitted new proposals to HUD. OW appeared to have dismantled its restorative justice program activities.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

Richmond services differed by program year. During the project's first year, the following organizations provided these:

- YSB provided intake, assessment, development of the individual plan, tutoring for the GED, substance abuse and personal counseling, removal of barriers to engaging in program activities (like needing bus tokens to attend);

- Opportunity West provided the eight sessions of the restorative justice curriculum to groups of youth and made the placements for subsidized work experience, generally through jobs in the City's Public Works Department;

- CYCLE worked with a group of younger teens studying the court system as a preparation for a Teen Court (which never materialized), studying the environment and engaging in other learning activities aimed at prevention of gang activities and criminal behavior;

- LEAP provided tutoring to youth who were severely hampered by low educational achievement (reading below seventh grade);

- PAL offered computer tutoring for low-achieving youth, but no youth took advantage of the program. The plan had been to make a stronger connection in Year Two between the youth and PAL by having the case manager go with the youth to the PAL site.

- YouthBuild offered GED preparation and training in the construction trades to eleven youth; three completed the program and were working.

During the project's second year, the YEES network provided the following services:

- Intake, assessment, development of individual service plans, work readiness and job placement for both unsubsidized and subsidized work was provided to new clients by YouthWorks, except for those new cases that probation and parole officers specifically referred to YSB for case management;

- Youth had the Community Service/Restorative Justice experience with Opportunity West until May 2001.

- LEAP continued to provide tutoring for youth whose academic achievement was several years behind his or her age-equivalent grade in school (less than seventh-grade achievement);

- From fall 2000 until May 2001, Neighborhood House provided case management and support services to 15 youth;

- YSB staff provided intake, assessment, development of the individual service plans, and case management for new clients referred to them; they continued case management for first-year clients.

All case managers, whether from YouthWorks, YSB, or Neighborhood House, worked together on work readiness and youth recreational and leadership activities. Staff reported some of their clients needed mental health and substance abuse services. The substance abuse specialist who had worked on the project with YSB during the project's first year moved to a new job in the second year.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

YouthWorks was situated in what was once retail space in downtown Richmond, an area of the city that was viewed as gang-neutral. Project offices were simply and functionally furnished. Case workers and the job developer for YouthWorks were on the second floor; the office was dark and all the staff shared the same room. YSB was in the YMCA building in the Coronado neighborhood; offices were new, bright, and inviting.

YouthBuild offices were in yet another commercial office space in downtown Richmond, but the instruction was at Gompers High School, which was not well-maintained. Neighborhood House was in a split-level former home in a residential neighborhood of North Richmond. It was not easily accessible by public transit, so the case worker provided transportation to local youth for events outside the neighborhood.

RichmondWorks was housed in a large two-story building on the main thoroughfare in downtown Richmond. Youth went there for work readiness classes that required training room computers. It was bright, busy, and welcoming.

LEAP was in a small, crowded room in the same building as RichmondWorks. Although the YEES staff wished LEAP classes were offered elsewhere, youth continued to come to this place because the instructors were reluctant to pack and carry their materials and supplies.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

During the first year, RichmondWorks hired a job developer and YSB hired a coordinator and three case managers. One factor that dissolved the original plan was that neither Neighborhood House nor IIEB hired case managers for their part of the work. None of the other partners needed to hire staff to provide the YEES project services. All but one of the YSB staff had left the project before the end of project's first year. These were replaced with more experienced case workers. All of these new case workers remained at the end of the second year, but the one hold-over from the first year had left and was not replaced.

The veteran case manager, assigned by Neighborhood House in North Richmond to manage 15 youth cases, completed her service at the end of the second year. She was reported to be effective in bringing North Richmond youth out of the neighborhood and engaging them in youth activities. She reported that her assignment had been to serve as their big sister for a year until they were in a better place. Eleven had jobs by the end of the year; one had run away from home; and two had been arrested. She returned to the Neighborhood House projects directed at younger North Richmond children that attempted to prevent crime and provided assistance for them in school.

YouthWorks hired three case managers for the project's second year; the workers remained at the end of the second year. The staff of RichmondWorks and YouthWorks were city employees at the time the grant was awarded to the city and they continued with the project.

The YSB staff reported that the grant was of such short duration that employees they hired for the grant began looking for permanent work almost from the start. One question to RichmondWorks was whether they hired staff for the second year, hoping for greater stability. Staff reported that was never a consideration, even though city workers were usually transferred to another position at the end of a grant.

The YEES staff spent much of the first year's training trying to resolve their differences in terminology and operation. Such terms as "case management" and "work readiness" meant different things for the youth development staff and for the employment and training staff. The project developed the beginnings of a handbook, but that project appeared to have been dropped.

Project staff did not meet together for training on a regular basis by the second year. The city had an annual training plan for each staff member, but training focused on employment and training issues and not on the special considerations of the demonstration project and its integrated services model. During an interview with case workers and the job developer the evaluator found that staff members did not understand the components of a Model Communities project.

Informal training occurred, however, among case managers from partners at the biweekly meetings of the Core Team. Led by a veteran case manager, active files were reviewed, plans were made for collaborative efforts, and difficulties were analyzed as a way for all to learn.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

The project's staff reported during the evaluation site visit in May 2001 that it had just enrolled its 200th client, its target number. Youth were substantially recruited through referral from parole and probation officers; YEES staff estimated that about 90% of the youth had been referred by the court. Most youth in the program were 16-17 years old with an age range of 14-23. Most were out-of-school youth, and the project was trying to move them to a more stable situation. Some youth who appeared in danger of dropping out of school were referred by the West Contra Costa County School District. A few youth came by self-referral on the project's reputation for getting youth jobs.

8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Specific services offered to YEES youth were described under Question 4. Youth were all offered intensive case management and access to work readiness training and job search and placement assistance. The staff tried to keep youth in school or get them back into traditional school, if possible. LEAP services were offered to youth attempting to earn a GED but whose reading levels were below 7th grade; the Sierra Adult School also offered GED classes to which the youth could be referred. An experienced teacher at Sierra School taught youth preparing for the GED on a voucher basis.

The YouthWorks director reported that having all youth enrolled through the city during the second year had eliminated many problems. Youth could see the whole program at the time of enrollment; they were assigned to case managers within a few days rather than a few weeks as happened during the first year. Case managers helped the youth get their enrollment package together more quickly (14 documents needed to be gathered to complete enrollment and start services). Some youth in the first year had taken jobs before they had completed work readiness training, and there had not been a concerted effort to keep school-age youth in school. Now the youth needed to demonstrate academic improvements and to complete work readiness before getting job placement services.

Beyond improving coordination of services for youth by having them on city rolls, core team meetings continued every other Thursday. One experienced YSB case manager facilitated the meeting of case managers; common efforts were coordinated and any youth's name could be raised by any case manager who was aware of a situation that needed attention. Difficulties were brought to these meetings as a way for all to learn.

The status of Richmond participants in YEES by May 2001 is reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Status of YEES Participants in May 2001

OUTCOMES	
Enrollment Goal	200
Enrollment as of May 14, 2001	177
Assessment and Case Management	153
Referred for Services	148
Community Service	107
In School	62
Enrolled in GED Classes	63
Completed Work Readiness Training	98
Completed Education	NR
Job Search/Job Placement	68
Subsidized Employment	79
Unsubsidized Employment	49
Exited the Program (Moved, Incarcerated)	33
Entered Military	NR
Entered Job Corps	NR

Gangs were still considered a problem, especially in North Richmond. One gang was broken when 20 gang members were arrested, but partners still believed that North Richmond was under-served, isolated and a dangerous part of the city.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Some youth had major transportation needs. North Richmond especially was a problem because it was not easily connected by public transit to downtown. Bus tokens and transportation by case managers were important collateral services offered project youth.

Youth who needed work clothes or funds to join the high school ball teams or cheer leading squads were able to receive help through the YEES grant. Leaders among the youth were taken on overnight retreats to places such as the Marin Headlands. Recreational trips were rewards for good attendance and progress in the youth's plans. As a reward, youth also were given gift certificates to buy Christmas presents. Weekends and evenings were a focus of these extra activities. Getting youth exhausted during their unstructured time, as one project official reported, was the best way of keeping them out of trouble.

Several logs reported that case managers met at the homes of youths and that they checked in with parents when the youth were in school. Some case managers reported that they tried to convince a youth's parents or guardian about the need for the youth to work and stay in school. Case managers also checked with school counselors to see how youth were progressing. Case managers accompanied youth for court appearances and assisted their parents navigate through the court system. They also helped youth get their driver's licenses.

The YEES staff became concerned by the increase in the number of young women being referred to the project. In their judgment, most of these had relationships with young men who were in trouble, rather than instigators of trouble themselves. YouthWorks scheduled a "Woman to Woman" conference for the fall 2001 that was to be developed by young women themselves. The conference was to focus on self-esteem, healthy relationships, and strategies to avoid leaving home, dropping out of school, or turning to prostitution and crime.

The career exploration class met six times: from 4-6 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays for three weeks. The curriculum was revised for the project's second year based on feedback from first-year participants. The curriculum covered career interests, work behavior, completing applications, resume preparation, pay and earnings (deductions), attire, time and attitude management. Sessions involved using self-paced career interest software, role playing interviewing techniques and work situations, completing actual applications and resumes, and reviewing the SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) competencies.

There was a plan at the end of the second year to recommend youth to work experiences that matched their preferences that surfaced during their career exploration activities. The city was moving to project-based learning in subsidized jobs. If a youth reported wanting to be a rap star, for example, the recommended work experience might be at a music store. This approach was used to keep t he youth from being discouraged from following her/his dream. Youth would be

required to complete an academically relevant project as part of the work experience, and the employers would agree to help them develop a training activity.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

Richmond was awarded a continuing year of funding by DOL. The project's goal was to move the project from partner-contract relationships to partner-voucher relationships. Vendor applications had been made widely available with the goal of having multiple opportunities for youth to receive services from organizations and agencies in the community.

The voucher system was seen as one way to use funds more directly to meet youth needs, such as providing funds for mental health and substance abuse treatment. The RichmondWorks assumption was that if funds were not tied up in subcontracts, more would become available to meet individual youth needs. The hope was that the effort would bring more CBOs into the network and keep existing partnerships together. This approach also would empower more grassroots organizations to provide services in their neighborhoods. In the end, a broader network would provide a way to build toward sustainability.

The youth council of the Workforce Investment Board, which had been in place for almost a year, decided not to provide job training and placement to 14 and 15 year olds, unless there was a special need. The program would have two foci: first, the year-round effort with in-school youth and, second, services to out-of-school youth. The latter would be coordinated by Sierra School through a contract arrangement. Special services would be offered through vouchers, and enrollment of all youth (and tracking the services they received) would be maintained by the city.

After DOL funding ends, RichmondWorks plans for all the city's youth to go to One-Stop centers being designed around the community for employment and training assistance under WIA funding. RichmondWorks was planning to put One-Stop satellites for adults (17 years and older) in four or five locations in the city with community partners, while the flagship One-Stop center would remain at the RichmondWorks Building. The city was looking for churches, public housing sites, or other community service locations. Community partners would not be paid anything but, perhaps, be offered some janitorial assistance by the city. Locations selected so far included: Hilltop Mall, Iron Triangle, and Parchester Village. When the PAL building is ready, it would serve as a satellite as well.

Youth who are 17 years old and older would have the following services available near their residences through the satellites:

- Typing a master application and resume;
- Literacy assessment; and
- Job search training.

They could be moved to more intensive services without searching for a job first, such as academic services or project-based learning for specific skills. Vocational education would not be available until they received marketable skills and got a job. They could then apply for a better job and better training. All RichmondWorks case managers were trained to know all the options available.

YODP provided more intensive services for case management and job development, but the RichmondWorks staff believed that it had all the skills necessary to serve this population as it is; staff members worked with their families, and they could work with their youth.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Seattle

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

Seattle's Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) was awarded to the Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WDC). The project's target area was in West Seattle, primarily in an unincorporated King County area called White Center, south of Roxbury Street and southward to the Highline area of Seattle and the City of Burien and west to Tukwila.

The YODP was called Project New Start, and it targeted primarily a community of recently immigrated Southeast Asian families and of a growing number of Hispanics families. Other parts of West Seattle had been receiving youth services through a Safe Futures grant, but this area had no employment services for youth offenders or other youth.

What drew King County's attention to the target area in West Seattle was its chronic economic instability, lowest school test scores in the city or county, and the highest youth crime and school drop-out rates. The county reported that the Highline area experienced a poverty rate of almost 52%, the highest concentration of poverty in the county, according to "The King County Phase II Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan"(March 2000). Low- income residents were attracted by the relatively low rents (averaging $630/ month in 1999); yet the cost of living required a wage of $15 an hour for a family of four in 1999. Most White Center residents could not afford to buy a home in the area without a livable wage.

Seattle's economy is diversified and strong; among the publicly held firms that generated more than $1 million in revenue in 1999 were Boeing (aircraft manufacturing), Microsoft (software development), Nordstrom (clothing), Weyerhaeuser (timber products), Starbucks (food), Amazon.com (books), Puget Sound Energy (utilities), Alaska Air Group (air travel), Expediters International and Airborne Freight (international freight), Safeco (insurance), Costco, (membership retail), and Washington Mutual (banking). Seattle is a day closer to Asia for shipping than any other U.S. port and is a main distribution point for the state's food and fiber products. Less well known, Seattle is a leader in research and development in advanced bioinformatics, genomics, telemedicine, medical equipment, and environmental engineering.

White Center's economy itself consists primarily of small, family-owned establishments. The neighborhoods are made up of modest single family households and a very large (733 units), multi-family housing project owned by King County called Park Lake Homes. Park Lake Homes bordered on Roxbury Street and was well-kept to the visitor's eye; yet most of the youth served in the New Start project come from Park Lake Homes. It is notorious for crimes, especially theft and drug dealing, according to the YODP grant proposal.

Of the 2,154 residents of Park Lake Homes, the county reported that 66% were Southeast Asian or Pacific Islanders and 64% of the residences consisted of at least some household members born outside the United States. In all, 67% of households reported a language other than English was used in the home. Many Asian residents were of Cambodian ethnicity. Forty-four languages were spoken in the area's schools.

The unincorporated White Center area is squeezed between two incorporated cities' police departments, and police and sheriff deputies found it hard to assess what the actual youth and crime culture was like. Statistics gathered for a proposal to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for a Gang Free Community (August 30, 2000) reported a 178% increase in gang-related crime in West Seattle, most noticeably in the Highline area that was part of the target neighborhood for New Start.

There have been difficult relationships between police and youth. During the first evaluation site visit, the evaluator watched as police scolded several youth for standing on the sidewalk near the project center, even though they were doing nothing wrong. The staff reported that police arrived during one of its activities and had all youth lie face-down on the floor while they searched for a youth they had come to arrest. Area residents petitioned for a community police substation in White Center, a petition that was granted. A King County Sheriff's deputy and a community police officer (who was Cambodian-American) were placed in White Center and were widely reported as improving community-police relationships. Both provided referrals and assistance to the New Start project.

In its proposal for New Start, Seattle estimated there were 80 gangs and 4,000 gang members. On the basis of the gang threat, Seattle had prepared a Safe Futures proposal that brought services to some youth in West Seattle, west of Interstate Highway 5 and south of the West Seattle Freeway. The executive director of Safe Futures, which was separately incorporated as a nonprofit agency, reported that gang activity had declined since Safe Futures began operation. Safe Futures was, however, oversubscribed with more clients than it had anticipated; so the decision was made by the Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WDC), then the local Private Industry Council (PIC), to write the YODP proposal to bring services directly to the White Center and Burien area, west of Interstate Highway 5 and south of Roxbury Street.

Gangs were described by case managers as generally 12-15 members in size and of the same ethnic make-up. Typically, inter-gang rivalry had been between two gangs of the same ethnic group, but newly arrived Hispanic youth formed gangs that challenged Southeast Asian gangs. While there was substance abuse and drug dealing among the Southeast Asian gangs, they tended to be involved more with car thefts. Hispanic gangs were more deeply involved in drug dealing. The number of Hispanic youth in the target population was growing, and the New Start staff thought that it was important to work with both Asian and Hispanic youth together through YODP as a way of building relationships that transcended their ethnic identities.

Many gangs, however, were organized as identity groups, and there was not much inter-generational gang development. That is, as the youth matured, they went on to other things in life rather than maintaining a gang lifestyle and recruiting younger youth into it.

"The King County Phase II Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan"(March 2000) reported a major decision not to build another residential youth facility, but to develop a more carefully nuanced gradual-sanctions program that began with earnest prevention efforts. The plan described a process involving tens of agency and community-based organization representatives to reduce crime, disproportionality, and incarceration among the county's youth. The lack of services for youth and reports of crime and drop-outs led to pressure on the WDC to do something in the White Center area, according to staff. This area of the county had not received many county services; and even after the New Start project was announced, local businesses and residents were not convinced it would be implemented.

Once funded, the project continued to receive support from the county leadership. The county executive and several Superior Court judges have come, for example, to events at the project center. Project New Start was featured by name in the King County Master Plan and in the county's proposal to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for a Gang Free Community. New Start was also added to the King County Website.

The WDC changed markedly since the beginning of the project. When it became a Workforce Development Board, it no longer provided services. Two-thirds of the staff were let go since spring 2000, and most had gone to work for the county or a nonprofit organization. The WDC formed a youth team to implement Workforce Investment Act (WIA) strategies initiated by the youth council, and the New Start was considered a model for how other youth initiatives should be structured. Administrative responsibility for the New Start project moved among the various WDC youth employment staff members. In spring 2001 it returned to the responsibility of a staff member who assisted in preparing the original proposal. One member of the WDC staff remarked on the high morale of the project staff as demonstrated by how well the project operated during the year or more that it took for the PIC to reinvent itself as the WDC.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Seattle's planning effort was focused on the, then-called King County-Seattle Private Industry Council (PIC). Staff reported that the PIC and the County Community Services Division were under pressure to do something for the youth in White Center because of the demonstrated need and the lack of any youth services in the geographic area from either public or private sources. The PIC worked with the staff of the County Workforce Training Program (WTP), Safe Futures and Pacific Associates, with which it had previously worked, and submitted the proposal without other collaborators.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

The WDC contracted with the King County Work Training Program (WTP), a part of the King County Department of Community and Human Services, and with Pacific Associates, a private

job placement firm. The WTP sub-contracted, in turn, with Safe Futures, King County Superior Court, and the Metropolitan YMCA. Pacific Associates was under contract for education, work readiness, placement and follow-up with youth 18 years old and older. King County WTP and its subcontractors served younger youth, generally 14-17 years old. These contract relationships worked successfully and were expected to remain intact.

The King County Superior Court (KCSC) found two veteran case workers in the Project New Start headquarters. The court shared the cost of the rent which made it possible for the project to occupy the entire second floor of the headquarters building. Many court-supervised youth came to the headquarters, but these case workers also needed to serve the youth in the southern part of the County who lived too far away to come to the building for services.

The Highline School District became more engaged in the project partnership over time. The Southwest Family Services organization, provided a tutor during the project's first year to prepare out-of-school youth for the GED exams, and she has been in the New Start headquarters building. During the project's second year, the School District gave school credit to youth who completed the project's work readiness program as part of the district's school-to-work curriculum.

Through another grant, the district located an alternative school on the first floor of the building. This program was to bring youth, achieving several years below their age-appropriate grade, up to grade level so that they could return to traditional school in class with their contemporaries. A number of New Start youth benefited from this program that was intended to prevent youth from dropping out.

Several opportunities were available for youth with specific interests. YouthBuild received several referrals for construction training and Opportunities Skyways accepted at least one youth to train for aircraft maintenance and repair training. Both programs assisted the youth in completing the GED preparation. Youth with specific vocational interests were also referred to the Southwest Seattle Community College, which was near White Center.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

Seattle's New Start operated as almost two separate programs. Safe Futures and KCSC offered services to younger youth while Pacific Associates provided parallel services to older youth.

The one exception was that the Metropolitan YMCA offered its "Teach Change" course, a work readiness and leadership development project, to younger youth while Pacific Associates provided all work readiness and personal support services to the older group. The emphasis of the Safe Futures/KCSC was on building relationships and earning a high school diploma or a GED. Youth were encouraged to spend time in the White Center site, asking questions, getting help, and staying off the streets. Pacific Associates, working with older youth, encouraged youth to earn a GED as they were getting work experience. The staff of all the service delivery partners were located in the New Start headquarters in White Center.

Few of the younger youth held unsubsidized jobs because they were generally 14-15 years of age when they were recruited. The work experience planned for these youth consisted of group projects that paid a stipend. Safe Futures staff believed that the work of the grant was to build relationships so that out of care for the community and each other, youth would become or remain law-abiding. Safe Futures:

- developed a graffiti abatement project for summer 2000 (painting murals in bus stop shelters, decorating trash boxes, repainting store walls),
- planned a mural painting for summer 2001 that would have an academic component in art for high school credit; and
- planned a trail development program for summer 2001 that would also offer an academic component in environmental studies for high school credit.

These projects kept the youth together, offered them stipends, and built relationships with the community. The school district planned to have a teacher from Evergreen High School work with New Start in preparing these projects for academic credit.

The staff recognized, however, that some of the younger youth were turning 16 and needed jobs that paid more than the stipends. These youth received a 10-week work readiness course during the school year for which the school district offered high school credit as part of its school-to-work curriculum. The work readiness gave the youth a structured activity for the winter months, continued the bonding activity, and prepared some youth for moving out more on their own.

Pacific Associates offered older youth basic skills education, pre-employment work readiness, job search and job placement assistance. The emphasis was on getting these older youth into jobs as quickly as possible because many already had family obligations and needed to have established independent living situations. Pacific Associates arranged for apprenticeship, vocational education, and support services; but these were wrapped around the work schedules.

Pacific Associates also assisted the Safe Futures and KCSC staff with placement of younger youth in jobs as they turned 16.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

A two-story white office building with its own parking lot was the center for the New Start project in the White Center area of West Seattle. The manager from WTP and the staff of Safe Futures, KCSC, and Pacific Associates were all on the second floor of this facility. It was simple and functional; youth seemed at ease coming and going during site visits. There were offices, a computer room, a greenhouse that was used for developing murals and other art projects, a classroom for GED classes, and a conference room. The whole central area of the second floor was "hanging out" space for the youth. The location was walking distance from the local schools

and Park Lake Homes, and it was gang-neutral. Everyone seemed pleased by its convenience and the youth's ease with it.

YouthBuild, to which some of the New Start youth were referred, refurbished the building as one of its work experience projects. They painted and re-carpeted the second floor.

During the project's second year, the school district located an alternative school on the first floor of the building. This grant-funded program aimed to bring youth's academic achievement up to their age-appropriate level and then help them transition back to the traditional high school. Some New Start youth benefited from this alternative arrangement. The grant was for one year, so it might not continue unless other funds were identified.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

The New Start project contracted for services with Pacific Associates and with WTP, which sub-contracted with Safe Futures, KCSC, and the Metropolitan YMCA. This group was managed by a former case manager from the County Office of Community and Human Services. He was an experienced case manager and this was his first administrative position.

Pacific Associates shared a job developer position with New Start and another project, and it hired two case workers, each of whom worked on New Start part time. Safe Futures hired two case managers and a community mobilizer — all Cambodian-Americans. KCSC assigned two veteran staff case managers. A case manager, who filled in for one of the KCSC case managers while she was on maternity leave, was added permanently to the New Start project toward the end of the second year. All case managers and the job developer worked as a single team, and there had been no turnover in staffing at the service delivery level.

The staff reported that they interacted all during the day; they also met every other week to review the project process and achievements. The project manager from WDC believed that it was one of her functions to bring the staff together to reflect on the progress of their efforts. It was during these cross-agency project meetings during the first year that New Start Vision and Guiding Principles were worked out, in what staff referred to as a very painful process. Staff reported that they developed a common vision and worked out differences of process peculiar to each organization.

The entire full-time staff from WTP, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates, and the YMCA attended a training session for "Street Soldiers," a program in San Francisco to teach youth how to de-escalate the violence of their language and actions. It served as the basis for revising the "Teach Change" curriculum. In addition, the staff received several technical assistance training sessions arranged by Research and Evaluation Associates, one on basic case management and the other on bi-level case management.

During the second year, staff did not meet for training regularly, although partners met every two weeks. The summer planning did, however, engage case managers as well as the partners in the

semi-weekly meetings. Superior Court offered occasional training opportunities that New Start case managers attended; one was on youth's transition from probation to the community.

The cross-agency training had been valuable to the staff. Safe Futures case managers explained how to work with Asian youth; the Pacific Associates staff members provided access to employers and ways to match youth and work; and the King County Superior Court staff taught the others the intricacies of juvenile court processes.

Leadership of the project at WDC and of Safe Futures changed during the project. The original administrative project manager (as distinct from the project manager from WTP), left the organization. The founding director of Safe Futures left to work for the city. Both were replaced by veteran members of their respective organizations.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Youth arrived at the New Start project from a number of sources. The Safe Futures community mobilizer and the Safe Futures case managers connected the opportunities of the New Start project with neighborhood youth and with the Asian business community. Their strategy was to identify older youth who were leaders, knowing that if these youth enrolled in the project their friends, younger siblings and kin would enroll as well. Depending on their age, case managers assigned the youth to either Pacific Associates or Safe Futures.

KCSC received its youth from the court, but the director of the Community Services section of the court screened the youth recommended by the court before they were assigned to the project. He wanted to be sure that the youth did not have problems too serious for the unstructured nature of the project: too violent or too seriously dependent on drugs or alcohol to participate actively. The final judges of the appropriateness of the assignment were the case managers. They had to decide if they could manage another case, if they could serve the youth where ever he/she lived in West Seattle, and if the youth's background was appropriate for the project.

Pacific Associates received its clients through Safe Futures or KCSC. The original assumption was that the youth would be fairly evenly divided between older and younger youth, but the number of older youth in the program was much smaller.

Although youth had not always attended the sessions planned for them, apparently most were regular about remaining in contact. The assumption was that the youth were enrolled in the project for the length of the grant, even though they may have been more deeply engaged with the project at certain times than at others. The only youth dropped from enrollment rolls were those who had moved out of the area. Some youth did not reside in the county's target neighborhoods; but if they had significant involvement in the target area, attending school for example, they were allowed to enroll.

The enrollment goal had been met by spring 2001. There was a concern about the size of the case loads the case managers were tracking, even though some moved to a level of follow-up

contact rather than intensive interaction and management. Middle school youth and others, who self-referred hoping for assistance in finding work, were made welcome to come by and were informed of work readiness, tutoring classes or other activities in which they could participate. There was not an effort to enroll them as full New Start participants; the staff reported that most were friends and relatives of participants.

8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Seattle's reports reflected the philosophy of the Safe Futures program — that it was important for the younger youth, who predominated in their project, to put off entry into the labor force until age 16 and older. The project had supplied group service opportunities that built ties between the youth and the community rather than individual work experiences as preparation for the work world. They pointed with pride to the fact that none of the summer 2000 graffiti work had been marred. They also reported that a woman attending a street fair, at which the youth were volunteering their services, commented that the previous year she would have been intimidated by their presence, but not so after seeing their community involvements.

All youth were given work readiness training. Those who were 14-18 years old were given a preliminary employment training program until they were ready for an individual job; then they were given a six-to-eight week intensive work readiness experience. The Teach Change course was also considered as a work readiness opportunity, and four Teach Change courses were offered over the two years. Three were funded under the grant and the fourth was funded through grants made to the YMCA. Pacific Associates provided a four-week program as part of a 90-day assessment and planning process for older youth. Their clients were expected to be working as soon as a job could be found, and the assessment and other referrals for service occurred while they were in the workforce.

Pacific Associates had the most developed youth employment network. The staff was also the most active in remaining in contact with the employers after placement of youth. By the second year, Pacific Associates staff were moving more of the younger youth into their first part-time jobs, virtually taking over the job search and placement function for the whole project.

Pacific Associates did not provide subsidized work placements while KCSC had a well-developed subsidized work experience network, most in nonprofit or government settings, such as, Seattle Youth Garden Works, libraries, community centers, and school districts.

An Aggression Replacement Training (ART) course had been offered to youth for whom anger management was an issue. The staff was pleased with the course, but attendance by youth was difficult to maintain.

The deputy sheriff and the community police officer reported that the activities of New Start were having an effect on the amount of trouble the youth were getting into. The deputy thought

that they were getting into the same kinds of trouble when they were on their own, but the project kept the youth so busy that they had much less time on their own.

"The King County Phase II Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan" set "not building another juvenile correctional facility" as a goal. Two staff from the Superior Court were developing an outcomes evaluation of the New Start project in an effort to gain on-going King County support for it as one effective graduated sanctions strategy for keeping youth out of residential correctional facilities. As a preliminary step, they compared data on a sample of the New Start youth 10 months before the project started and 10 months after it started. For 31 youth, in the 10 months prior to enrollment in New Start:

- The average number of referrals to the prosecutor per youth was .94;
- The average number of convictions per youth was .61;
- The average number of admissions to detention per youth was 1.26; and
- The average number of days in detention was 18.6.

In the 10 months participating youth have been enrolled in New Start:

- The average number of referrals to the prosecutor per youth was .42;
- The average number of convictions per youth was .23;
- The average number of admissions to detention per youth was .74; and
- The average number of days in detention was 8.9.

While the data were suggestive, the comparisons involved two snapshots of a small number of project participants. The youth were being compared with themselves, so it may be possible that the reductions in their court involvement were based more on their growing maturity than on results of the demonstration. The group assigned to this effort, the Juvenile Justice Evaluation Work Group, planned to gather additional data to provide comparison group analysis and to shed more light on the reduction of risk factors and the addition of protective factors in the youths' lives.

WDC maintained records on the New Start project for all the partners; their report, as of June 30, 2001, is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Status of New Start Participants in June 2001

OUTCOMES	
Enrollment Goal	166
Enrollment as of June 30, 2001	200
Assessment and Case Management	200
Referred for Services	81
Community service	NR
In School	128
Enrolled in GED Classes	17
Completed Work readiness Training	85
Completed Education	NR
Job Search/Placement Activity	NR
In Subsidized Employment	52
In Unsubsidized Employment	61
Exited the program (moved)	NR
Entered Military	NR
Entered Job Corps	NR
Incarcerated	12

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Seattle found that it was important to offer services to the families of project youth. The case managers found themselves explaining the American culture to the youth's parents and the Cambodian culture to the youth. One case manager explained that the Cambodian teachers and intellectuals were among the most oppressed in their home country, so recently immigrated Cambodian adults lacked formal education. It was difficult for them to understand the demands of U.S. schools on their children and the expectations schools had for parental involvement. The staff reported that the project's emphasis in helping the youth with school was resulting in better grades; they were reluctant to have anything interfere with this progress.

Counseling and other specific individual needs were paid for on a fee-for-service basis. Tutoring was provided at the center Mondays through Thursdays after school; some work readiness exercises were also given on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The Teach Change program was taught on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. On Thursday afternoons during the first year, there was a class in traditional Cambodian dancing; the girls performed at school, at the center, and in the community.

Hispanic and African American youth did not "hang out" at the center the way the Southeast Asian youth did. It was pointed out that they came from farther south in the target area, so they came for specific activities, but not for informal conversation or mentoring.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

Seattle was interested in continuing services to the White Center community, and members of the partnership have enjoyed working with and learning from each other. King County was reported to be having an especially difficult 2000-2001 financial year; state voters had repealed the registration fee for automobiles in the previous year, a major revenue source for county programs. They were relieved and delighted when they received an additional year of DOL funding under the Letter Competition for additional funds. Part of the evaluation effort described earlier was an effort to demonstrate that the New Start project was saving the county funds by reducing the youth's court involvement, detention days and likelihood of needing residential placement. The goal would be to include the project as a pilot effort within the county budget and begin to add other neighborhoods around the county as the model proved its worth. One indicator of political success was that $30 million was cut from the 2001-2002 county budget to address the financial crisis, but nothing was taken from the alternatives to detention program planning.

The Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003, moreover, describes the "Continuum of King County's Roles in Youth Services" (page 37) from prevention of delinquency to intensive intervention. The planned response to youth concerns is anticipated to

be based on models working in the community and built on infrastructures of inter-agency and inter-organizational partnerships. The entire county apparatus is being refocused on comprehensive community approaches to providing youth services needs in an integrated and comprehensive way.

The transition to make WIA youth funds effective was described earlier in the report. New Start was serving as an organizational model for other youth programs, another way to sustain the New Start effort. The county was also in the process of qualifying for Annie Casey Foundation funding for reducing youth violence. The foundation had financial difficulties of its own following a year of low returns on its investment portfolio. This may yet, however, prove to be another source of funds to continue New Start efforts.

APPENDIX E

Category III Final Report Summaries

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Bakersfield, California

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

Bakersfield's Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) operated in Kern County, California's third largest. The county consisted of an unusual blend of urban, suburban, and rural settings that ranged from small towns to metropolitan Bakersfield. At the time of the demonstration, about 330,000 residents lived there, including about 48,000 youth between 14 and 24.

Project officials reported that the county tended to have high crime and unemployment rates. Of all youth living in the county, an estimated 70% lived at or below the poverty line.

The context of the project, which was named Youth GOALS, generally remained unchanged over the two-year grant period. There were a few exceptions, however. In October 2000, for example, project officials reported that the severity of crimes committed by youth had increased. By May 2001 crime had peaked and declined somewhat.

Still, police reported a total of 42 homicides in Bakersfield in 2000, with 80% of them occurring in the city's Southeast region. Of these, 20% were committed by youth under age 25. In Bakersfield alone there were about 15,000 juvenile offenders. Officials also estimated that 36 different street gangs with 4,000 members operated in the Bakersfield area.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

A community organizer convinced the Employers Training Resource (ETR) to apply for the demonstration grant. The project was to target incarcerated youth and those who were at risk of court involvement. The youth were to be between ages 14 and 24 and living in metropolitan Bakersfield.

Several representatives then met to plan and prepare for writing the proposal. The organizations included the Bakersfield Police Department, Kern County Sheriff's Department, Kern County Probation Department, Department of Human Services, and Kern High School District. Students from court and community schools, parents, and other community leaders also participated in planning for the grant.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

Youth GOALS officials believed the project would strengthen linkages among several agencies by providing job referral and placement services for offenders. More specifically, grant officials identified these agencies as part of what they called a "beginning network:" Bakersfield Police Department, Kern County Sheriff's Department, Kern County Probation Department, Department of Human Services, Employers' Training Resource (ETR), Kern County Mental Health, Kern County Superintendent of Schools, and Kern High School District.

Project officials planned to use the grant to "expand and connect" existing programs that served the target population and to reduce recidivism by providing clients with aftercare services. Services were to include case management, life skills training, continued basic skills training, and monthly job fairs. Funds were to be used to increase the number of personnel, provide more modern curriculum materials, and expand ongoing activities and events that were customized to the needs of youth at risk of court involvement.

Programs that were to partner with the demonstration project included:

- STAR Academy, which provided services to court-ordered youth, including combined academic and social skills development training;
- Crossroads, a residential project for youth, which used boot camp strategies to teach self-sufficiency and discipline;
- Female Treatment Program for offenders, which included schooling and job placement training activities to promote successful re-entry of female offenders into their community;
- Retreat from the Streets, a three-day camping retreat for youth at risk of court involvement;
- Camp Keep "Leadership Summits," which offered youth at risk of court involvement a one-week residential stay in the mountains and/or on the coast;
- Police Assistance League, which provided after school activities and sponsored recreational and tutorial services;
- School Community Violence Prevention Task Force, which provided public service forums and interacted in classrooms by providing anti-alcohol, drugs, tobacco and gang involvement sessions; and

- Gang Risk Intervention Project, which operated within public schools and offered projects that targeted youth at risk of becoming involved in gangs.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

The project initially focused its efforts on building partnerships. By spring 2001, however, it had successfully transitioned to what officials called a "balanced approach" that also stressed serving clients with some basic services, such as counseling, orientations to the workplace, and job placements. Youth GOALS at the end of the grant period also was working more closely with established agencies to provide youth job referral services, GED preparation training, and mental health services.

This approach was largely the result of contacts the project made with 38 community-based organizations through monthly meetings of the Southeast Neighborhood Partnerships. Agencies attending these meetings included: AmeriCorps, Dedicated Dental, Kern County Mental Health, Kern County School District, the Safe Schools Unit, Kern County Network for Children, Kern Family Health Care, Clinica Sierra Vista, the county Housing Authority, and Mercy Outreach.

The project also continued its efforts to build relationships with a number of schools, including the STAR Academy, the Adult School, Vista West High School, Auburn Community Learning Center, South High School, and the Police Activities League, which provided recreational activities for youth. By May 2001, the project also was attempting to build partnerships with One-Stop centers in Bakersfield, which increasingly served as a referral agency.

According to project officials, the information sharing that occurred at these meetings allowed the project staff to become more knowledgeable about their clients and to find additional services for them. During the last year of the grant period, for example, the project staff learned through the meetings that churches in the target neighborhoods provided a myriad of services. Unfortunately, however, they generally were available only to members of the churches.

Although the project began to focus more on referring clients to other agencies it also continued to provide them some direct services. These included, for example, training to help clients prepare for job interviews. The training attempted to make clients more knowledgeable about how to dress for interviews and how to prepare resumes. Discussions about personal hygiene also were held. To help clients prepare for job interviews, project officials planned to purchase a video camera to tape mock interviews. The project also provided clients bus passes for transportation to and from job interviews. And, it directed clients to job fairs and workshops.

Project officials also invited collaborative partners to attend a training session that was held in August 2000. In all, 12 agencies attended the session, which included topics on building and maintaining effective partnerships, how to engage the community, and how to reach at-risk youth and parents. Project officials planned to hold additional seminars.

By May 2001, the evaluator noted that:

- the project staff was still considering providing clients a tattoo removal and transportation services. Some project clients, however, had been referred to other agencies operating these services;

- the project and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools had signed a memorandum of agreement that provided six computers to the STAR Academy;

- the parents of clients continued to have little or no involvement in the project, although some parents themselves had received help with resume writing and in finding a job; and

- a project advisory board still had not been formed.

According to the evaluator, project officials came to realize they should have worked harder to establish and then maintain partnerships and linkages with other agencies earlier than they did. They also said that they should have started the project by better focusing on building partnerships with agencies that already were providing services.

Project officials believed that the project had succeeded in improving information sharing among various organizations. They said that because the project had received additional funds as part of its one-year extension from DOL, Youth GOALS would be able to continue participating in community meetings. This would help the project develop and build even stronger collaborative partnerships in the future.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

Facilities for the Bakersfield project were in Southeast Bakersfield, an area that had high crime and poverty rates. The facility, however, was a distance from some areas served by the project and arrangements had to be made to transport youth to and from the facility. Another challenge for participants traveling to the facility was that it was in an area were gangs were active. As a result, some gang members hesitated to travel to the facility because it was in rival territory.

By October 2000, project officials were considering relocating project offices to an area of Bakersfield that was gang-neutral. Officials at the time reported that there had been drive-by shootings and an increase in gang activity near the facility. By spring 2001, however, project officials had decided that the project would remain at the site because they considered it vital to the welfare of clients. Officials also told the evaluator that gang activity in the area had abated somewhat and that the staff had started taking precautionary safety measures. Staff, for example,

had begun arranging meetings with clients at various sites around the city to avoid possible gang clashes.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

At the beginning of the project, ETR designated one of its full-time employees as job developer and day-to-day manager of Youth GOALS. The job developer had experience managing incarcerated youth and had been trained as a job developer and instructor. The job developer also had participated in a three-week course on the operation of JTPA programs as well as other seminars on job training, work opportunity tax credits, and bonding.

In June 2000, the project hired a new employment counselor to serve as a community liaison. According to project officials, his expertise as a parole officer proved an asset to the project. His knowledge about the juvenile justice system helped open doors.

In October 2000, a third member of the team was hired as a case manager. She had experience as director of JTPA programs and had worked with employment and training programs. She developed several data collection programs that tracked clients and provided demographic and other information. The programs also included several computer-generated forms, including a Youth GOALS application, a resume worksheet, a completed resume, job referrals, and a contact sheet for follow-up appointments and telephone calls.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Referrals to the project increased significantly as the project matured. They came mainly from juvenile probation, the public school system, Kern County Mental Health, adult probation, and as walk-ins.

By January 2000, 30 participants had enrolled in the project. Ten months later the number of participants had reached 108. By May 2001, enrollment in the project had grown to 427. Of this total:

- 298 (57%) of the clients were males and 129 (43%) were females;
- all participants were between 14 and 24 years old;
- 78 (22%) were black; 174 (49%) were Hispanic; 80 (23%) were white;
- 72 (17%) of clients were receiving some form of public assistance;
- 25 (23%) of clients were either pregnant or parents;

- 190 (64%) of the males and 50 (39%) of the females were involved with the juvenile justice system. Their offenses ranged from the less serious such as vandalism, theft, tagging, and curfew violations to the more serious, including burglary, assault and battery, possession of a loaded fire-arm, grand theft auto and drugs (possession and sales);

- 174 (41%) of the 427 clients held either a high school diploma or GED. Of the remaining clients, a majority attended either alternative schools or a court-ordered school.

- Most clients came from areas where gangs were active. Of the 427 clients, only 23 admitted that they were affiliated with a gang. Of the 427, 204 chose not to respond when they were asked about gang affiliation.

8. What types of training, employment and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Although much of the evidence was anecdotal, Youth GOALS received good reviews from school teachers, workers at One-Stop centers, employers, other agencies staff members, and clients. A teacher at the STAR Academy, for example, told the evaluator she found the project effective and vital.

According to project officials, of 427 clients 94% completed resumes. Most have received training on improving their job interview skills. In addition, many clients have been registered with the CalJobs statewide job search Internet site.

Project officials also reported that by October 2000 75% of all participants had been referred to jobs with an average of five job leads per participant. On average, 124 referrals were made each month to various service agencies throughout the Bakersfield area. Clients were sent to educational programs, youth employment programs such as the public schools' Work Experience Program, counseling centers, health centers, tattoo removal programs, and housing agencies.

In September 1999, ETR, the project's fiscal agent, reported that seven of 39 clients enrolled in the project had been placed in jobs. In September 2000, ETR reported 19 placements in jobs. By May 2001, ETR reported 51 had been placed.

Several barriers limited the successful participation of youth in the project. According to project officials, these included family and living situations, probation, incarceration, pregnancy or parenthood, a lack of educational attainment and work experience, learning difficulties and a lack of suitable work clothing.

Analysis of demographic data by project staff in general showed:

- of project clients who dropped out of school, most dropped out in the 10th and 11th grades;
- many clients could not read or write;
- many clients, because of schooling difficulties in their early years, were incapable of completing the academic requirements needed to receive a diploma;
- many clients lacked soft skills; and
- many clients had transportation problems and found it difficult getting to training, even with public transportation.

In addition, the evaluator found that challenges facing the project included:

- operating in a turbulent and unsafe location;
- finding ways to adequately prepare participants for jobs;
- determining appropriate times for meeting with youth; and
- finding incentives to get, and keep, young people motivated to attend training.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

In October 2000, the evaluator reported that clients received no collateral services directly through the program, although they were referred to community agencies on an as-needed basis. The evaluator also concluded that providing clients with recreational activities would be difficult to organize because of gang activity in the target areas.

One outcome that resulted from increased collaboration with other agencies was that Youth GOALS began working with the Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance Program to assist clients

who were eligible to have their juvenile records expunged. The project, when appropriate, provided letters attesting to a client's character.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

According to the evaluator, the project gained a foothold as an established community agency during the grant period. More than anything else, the evaluator reported, this would enhance the possibility that Youth GOALS would continue into the future after demonstration grant funds ended. The many contacts that project officials made with various agencies would only strengthen the possibility of this. According to one project official, the project was "now seen as non-threatening and providing a true service."

In October 2000, it appeared that the lack of funding streams posed an immediate problem for the project staff. The evaluator noted then that staff positions were funded through grants and that there were no other funds to support the project after the demonstration grant ended. This situation was alleviated somewhat with the one-year extension of the demonstration project, including $150,000 in additional funds. Project officials in spring 2001 also continued to search for additional funding sources. In addition, a senior administrator at ETR assured the evaluator that efforts to reach the target population would continue even without demonstration funds because the job developer and counselor were full-time ETR employees.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Clifton, New Jersey

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

The Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP), which was named Job Ready, operated in a densely populated and troubled urban area in New Jersey's Passaic County. In all, about 170,000 residents were crammed into eight square miles that constituted the City of Paterson, the project's target.

Paterson, which has the distinction of being the nation's first industrial city, is also one of the state's poorest cities. As in many other large urban centers, the city's industry and quality of life started to decline steadily in the 1960s.

By 2000, the city's unemployment rate was more than double that of the state's. Poverty among those under 18 stood at 27% and about 43% of Paterson's households were headed by females. A large number of the city's poor lived in five large public housing developments.

At the time the demonstration project operated, Paterson had a large ethnic population: 44% were Hispanic and 39% were black, in comparison to 18% who were white. The city also was experiencing an influx of immigrants from the war-torn Balkans.

The city's schools reflected many of the problems associated with a high poverty rate. About 75% of students qualified for free or reduced lunches. In 1998 the state took over the city's school system because of a high failure rate and poor student performance on standardized tests.

Well into 2001, Paterson's economy continued its decline. Lucent Technologies, a company that previously had added jobs, had begun laying off workers. Unemployment also was increasing as were drug cases in juvenile court. According to the chief of police, many of the city's young people had turned to selling drugs to bring in income for their families. The Federal Drug Enforcement Administration also identified Paterson as a regional hub for illicit drug trafficking.

There were, however, a few encouraging signs by spring 2001, possibly the result of efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency. Since 1998, the city reported a 28% decline in its juvenile crime rate. Also reported were a 6% decline in the city's school drop-out rate; a 31% decline in Passaic County's juvenile custodial commitments; and a 65% average curfew compliance rate. Of 6,300 adults on probation, most fell into the 18-to-24-year-old category. And, officials estimated that 39 gangs with 175 members operated in the city.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

The Passaic County Probation Department identified the YODP grant and approached the county's Workforce Development Center, which agreed to become the project's sponsor and lead agency. To plan for the grant, several meetings were held with representatives from various agencies, the prosecutor's office, a mayor's task force, and the Board of Education.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

The Passaic Vicinage Probation Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey was to manage the community collaborative effort that would provide job readiness, education, and employment services to male and female juvenile and young adult probationers 14-24 who were either unemployed or underemployed. The project was to build on several existing programs. These included those sponsored by Paterson's Alternative High School, the county's Workforce Investment Board summer jobs program, the Village Initiative, the Violation of Probation Drug Court, the Comprehensive Enforcement Program, and the One-Stop Technology Center.

Job Ready's goal was to reduce recidivism and gang participation by providing services for up to 300 youth on probation. This was to be done by helping the youth find job and training opportunities that would enable them to become economically self-sufficient as well as pay their court-ordered financial obligations. Probation officers and judges were to refer youth to the project.

A main component of the project was a 20-hour after-school job readiness workshop at the Paterson Adult School. Clients were to be instructed in how to search for jobs; how to prepare for interviews; how to prepare a resume; and how to develop good work habits. If clients needed further education or other vocational training, they were to be referred to appropriate training facilities. Clients also were to be paid a $5 stipend for every hour they spent in the workshop.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

Job Ready's lead organization was the Passaic County Workforce Development Center, which passed management responsibilities to the Passaic Vicinage Probation Division. Throughout the pilot, two assistant chief probation officers shared supervisory tasks of the project. The project's day-to-day operation was run by a coordinator hired specifically for the task.

The Village Initiative, a two-year-old collaboration of agencies to combat juvenile delinquency and gang membership, served as a conduit between the project and community leaders.

Initiative members came from the courts, law enforcement, schools, Workforce Investment Board, the state Attorney General's Office, and other state and local agencies.

Since September 2000, project officials also had formed alliances with several development agencies, including the CASA workforce development program, the St. Paul Community Development Corporation, and the New Jersey Development Corporation. Although these alliances were informal, the project coordinator reported she found them helpful. The partners have helped the project coordinator plan events such as job fairs and teen summits for clients. The Village Initiative and St. Joseph's Hospital also have partnered to provide project participants health care services.

In July 2000, the partnership with Paterson Adult School ended and two teachers hired for the project departed. In all, four classes for about 170 participants were completed during spring and summer. By summer 2000 all funds for the teachers had been expended. The teachers also were reluctant to continue the program, even if additional funds had become available, because they experienced problems maintaining discipline in classes. According to the evaluator, it also appeared that the teachers became overloaded because they had to continue teaching their regular adult classes, which mostly were for high school dropouts and pregnant teenagers.

In retrospect, and according to the project's coordinator, it appeared that better partnerships and linkages could have been formed, if connections between Job Ready and the Village Initiative had been put into place at the project's outset. It also appeared that project outcomes could have been enhanced, if Job Ready had teamed with several existing programs run by the probation department. These programs included:

- a six-week summer recreational program for juveniles on probation and others seeking to get away from their environments. The program, which was 13 years old, sought to reduce gang violence and take drug dealers off the street;

- Safe Haven, which was part of a community policing grant. Through this program, police and the Board of Education provided activities for troubled youth at a neighborhood school until 10 p.m. each day;

- Volunteers in Education, a cooperative effort between the Family Court and Probation Divisions. In this program, adult volunteers assisted with the rehabilitation and monitoring of youth on probation.

The evaluator also noted:

- originally project officials planned for Lucent Technologies to provide some collateral services, but this did not occur;
- at the start of the project there was no gang advisory board;
- the Mayor's Taskforce on Crime and Delinquency met regularly to address Paterson's growing drug trade; and
- project officials believed the Paterson Adult School was critical to early project gains and that clients benefited from services resulting from the linkages among partners created by the project.

Throughout the grant period, the project faced several barriers that impeded progress toward reaching its objectives. These included a three-month delay in starting, a lack of support from potential employers, unanticipated personal problems and hardships of clients themselves, staff retention, and inadequate data collection methods, which caused confusion and discrepancies in reports. Also, the school component finished earlier than was expected, partly because of a shortage of funds and partly because of discipline and academic issues involving clients. And, the resignation of the job developer left only the project coordinator to manage more than 170 clients.

The evaluator noted several additional barriers hampered the project:

- **Staffing.** There were too few project staff members to adequately handle the number of clients enrolled in the project.
- **Space.** There was insufficient space for counseling and instruction of clients in groups.
- **Tax Incentives.** The project staff was unsuccessful in convincing employers to use the federal tax incentive program. As a result, some clients may have been denied opportunities to work.
- **Educational Opportunities.** Clients often failed to take advantage of educational opportunities. Many failed to learn to read and to obtain their GEDs. In some instances, clients were unable to get a driver's license because they could not read.

In retrospect, it appeared that assisting clients prepare for jobs — and then helping them find jobs — was a major challenge that increased over the life of the project and with the rise of

Paterson's unemployment rate. By May 2001, the evaluator concluded that project outcomes, perhaps, could have been enhanced by:

- closer attention to building personal connections with clients and then maintaining the connections;
- retaining, and building, stronger linkages with educational institutions, community and business organizations; and
- better use of social services that already were in place to serve young people.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

Job Ready's offices were housed in the Probation Building where adult probation officers worked. Project offices also were near juvenile probation offices. The facility's location was ideal in several ways. It was in the heart of downtown Paterson and within walking distance of the Paterson Adult School and the Passaic County Workforce Development Center. It also provided project officials an opportunity to connect with participants through the probation offices of the adult court. As a result, project officials were able to counsel clients as they reported to their probation officers.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

To help accomplish its goals, grant funds were to be used to recruit and fill four and one-half staff positions. The positions included, a coordinator/counselor to handle administration and work with probationers (full time); a job developer/counselor to work directly with clients (full time); two part-time teachers from Paterson schools to teach Job Ready classes; two part-time teachers aides to work with students; and a part-time secretary/student assistant. The two full-time hires, who received no training, were hired less for their expertise and experience than for their potential — "on what we anticipated that they could bring to the program," according to one probation official who supervised the project.

Several staff changes occurred over the project's course. The job developer/counselor who was hired for the project left in September 2000 and was not replaced. In addition, the project did not replace teachers from the Adult School after they left. As a result, the project coordinator had to carry project responsibilities alone and without adequate help. In spring 2001, at the time of the third evaluation site visit, the coordinator was absent on maternity leave.

Throughout the project, the probation department also experienced what appeared as a debilitating attrition among its 40 probation officers. In September 2000, there were eight vacant

positions in the drug court and five vacancies in the juvenile department. The officers had left for higher paying jobs with the state and neighboring cities. The remaining four probation officers involved directly with the project managed case loads that each averaged about 55 clients.

The project coordinator said she depended heavily on the officers to serve as the "muscle" behind the demonstration project. But as a result of attrition in their ranks, the officers were not always able to adequately track project clients to ensure that they, often as conditions for parole, attended training, counseling sessions, and job interviews.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Most referrals to the project came from probation officers, although judges assigned a few clients. Client offenses mainly involved drugs, robbery, and breaking and entering. By spring 2001, there were 234 clients registered with the project. Of these, 198 had been enrolled in training. The project's enrollment goal was 300.

8. What types of training, employment and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

The project included these aspects of workforce development best practices: individual needs assessment; career awareness and counseling; job exploration; expectations of high skills standards; regular evaluation of client progress; facilitation of additional schooling and job placement; and active participation by employers.

The project made several attempts to connect with employers, including sending 1,000 flyers and writing, calling, and visiting prospective employers. As a result, some employers hired clients. These include United Parcel Service and several small businesses. A project official, however, said that the project's efforts "did not necessarily come to fruition." Some clients chose "other options" or failed to follow through on job leads. Employers, according to the project coordinator, had mixed feelings about hiring project clients who had been in trouble with the law. Some employers, nonetheless, were convinced to interview clients and consider them for jobs.

One project official believed that collaborating with One-Stop centers had been helpful. The centers shared job leads with project officials and invited clients to job fairs. The evaluator, however, reported that the project never connected with the area's largest employment network, apparently because it could not afford to share some services with the other organizations in the network.

By spring 2001, 170 clients had attended the four Job Ready classes that were held at the Paterson Adult School. Students attending classes were paid $5 for each hour they attended classes. Successful completion of classes required 20 hours of training. Of those who had attended Job Readiness classes:

- 25 (13%) had obtained employment;
- 10 (5%) had completed their education, receiving either a high school diploma or GED;
- 24 (12%) had returned or remained in school; and
- 18 (9%) had been incarcerated.

In September 2000, the evaluator noted that an important task for the project coordinator was to identify and develop job opportunities for clients. Through an alliance, Workforce Development agreed to save 20 jobs for project youth. The jobs involved work on a county road crew for 35 hours a week at $5.50 an hour. In all, nine clients were hired.

In addition to the alliance, the project coordinator called on businesses in hope of finding clients jobs. Her efforts generally did not pay off, however. In some cases, companies offered to hire clients only for menial jobs at low pay rates. Other employers, who the project coordinator hoped would play major roles by hiring clients, refused to promise they would hire them. Employers told project officials they had large numbers of qualified applicants for only a limited number of jobs. In September 2000, the evaluator concluded that it appeared that the project coordinator was forced to deal with bias and discrimination by employers toward project clients, too few job opportunities, and the failure of employers to keep promises to hire project youth.

In another effort to find jobs for project youth, the project coordinator arranged for students to attend a Rotary Club session to network with business people. Although 10 youth were invited, only three attended. Since then, however, a Rotary Club contact agreed to conduct mock interviews with participants and to provide volunteer opportunities for clients at Rotary events.

In September 2000, the project coordinator also reported that the project faced barriers involving the clients themselves. She said involvement of parents in the project had been "nonexistent" and that clients had told her they did not want their parents involved in their lives. Probation officers also voiced frustration with clients and said that many have not been motivated either to work or attend classes.

The project coordinator relied on probation officers to put what she called "muscle" behind the project. If clients were not held accountable by probation officers, they missed appointments with potential employers. On some occasions, probation officers served as escorts. One example of this was when the project coordinator took a group of clients to a mall to apply for

jobs. Another was when Job Ready workshops were being held. During the classes, officers observed clients and ensured that those on probation attended training.

After clients finished their probation, the officers often lost contact with them — even though the officers believed the clients still needed counseling. A lack of resources, according to officers, prohibited them from tracking clients after their probation ended.

As the project coordinator had done, probation officers also identified more personal factors that worked against project youth. These included the breakdown of families, lack of positive parental support, parental criminal activity, lack of educational attainment, drug problems, poor living conditions, hunger, illness, the lack of transportation, and lack of motivation. Interviews with clients during evaluation site visits appeared to confirm these points.

Organizational issues and competition from similar agencies and organizations to provide youth similar services also impeded the program's efforts. The project staff, because of its small size, was unable to give clients adequate attention, especially time for counseling. The project coordinator noted that "if we had twice or three times the staff, we'd make a difference." She also said that the project should have included a larger school component to address clients' educational needs.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Several "Teen Summits" were held for participants. The summits were in locations accessible to the youth, including the gymnasium of the local community college, a community center, and a church. Topics discussed at the summits involved teenage sexual activity and AIDS awareness; the importance of letting young people have their say on issues; and how youth could go about finding jobs. About 50 youth attended each summit, perhaps mainly because officers required their attendance. Project officials confirmed this, reporting that a few clients "showed up on their own." Other community activities attended by clients included a family picnic sponsored by the Paterson Village Initiative.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

In January 2000, the evaluator reported that linking the project to the successful Village Initiative "provides a higher potential for the continuation of the project." The evaluator also reported that the project's strong ties with other agencies, including the Adult School, and the county's Workforce Development Center, would enhance the potential for its continuation. By spring 2001, however, the project had severed its ties with the Adult School, and had just begun connecting with the county's Workforce Development Center.

In September 2000, the evaluator reported that project officials believed that the program was worthwhile and recommended that it become a "special component" of the overall juvenile crime prevention effort — although several changes were needed, especially more funding, if it were to succeed. Project officials at the time also believed that the project's focus should be on job readiness training and that five to 10 probation officers were needed to manage the large number of clients. In addition, the officials said that more efforts were required to address the "special needs" of clients who were not in school, who were uneducated, and who were unemployed.

By spring 2001, the evaluator noted that these structural changes to the project had not begun to take place. It also was uncertain whether the project could be continued, considering that demonstration funds had been expended and DOL had not refunded the project. The evaluator also noted that other funding constraints and pressing matters, such as the challenge of hiring probation officers, also had pushed project continuation toward the bottom of the county's priority list.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Knoxville, Tennessee

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

Several encouraging contextual developments occurred during the course of Knoxville's Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP), which was called Project NOVA (New Opportunities for Vocational Advancement). In fact, since the initial evaluation site visit was made in November 1999, significant physical changes occurred in the city's enterprise community, which also constituted the project's target area.

This blighted inner-city area, where about 48,000 residents lived — nearly one-third of the city's population — was starting to experience a construction boom and increased attention from community leaders who appeared determined to overcome years of neglect. For decades, the area suffered from high poverty (40%) and high unemployment (12%) as well as high crime, educational underachievement, and increased gang activity. By April 2001, the neighborhood buzzed with construction activity that signaled positive change.

Several churches, as well as non-profit organizations and public agencies that included the Police Department, had set up shop in the project's target area and were working to prevent and reduce crime. Volunteer and non-profit groups such as Habitat for Humanity also had begun ambitious programs to refurbish and build new housing. One project aimed at troubled youth, YouthBuild, went out of business, however. Several other organizations, nonetheless, provided after-school programs for youth who were at-risk of criminal involvement. And, Pellissippi State Technical College and Knoxville College also showed increased interest in the community and established or strengthened programs they operated there.

Soon after the project began, an old public housing development was torn down. In its place was being built new transitional housing units for families that were to become homeowners. The development was part of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development's Hope Six grant program. These efforts, especially if considered collectively, appeared to indicate that change was in the air and that the target area would become more stable and safer and, therefore, more attractive to live in.

There were mixed changes in Knoxville's crime situation, however. Although assignments of juveniles to training school declined, there was a 25% increase in negligence cases involving children. Following national trends, the city's crime rate in general leveled off, although violent crimes, especially murder, increased somewhat. Officials estimated that 90% of Knoxville's 247 gangs operated within the enterprise community.

Over the course of the project, the demonstration gained increased support from local politicians, community, and industry leaders. Project officials believed that the support would build even more as the project matured, became more financially stable, and as word of its successes spread throughout the Knoxville establishment and broader community.

In spring 2001, the mayor had about three years left to serve in his term. Project officials believed this would help ensure continued support for the project as well as for revitalization efforts within the target area.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Planning for Project NOVA was initiated by the Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC). Other major public partners that were consulted or brought into the planning stage included Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC), Knoxville Police Department, Knox County School District, Knox County Juvenile Court, the Metropolitan Drug Commission (MDC), and the Office of the District Attorney General. The organizations collaborated with several other community partners. Youth and parents were not involved directly in planning for the grant.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

CAC was to have fiduciary control and general overview of Project NOVA. The project was to be organized and managed by employees from the Truancy Center, a KCDC component.

According to the grant application, Project NOVA was to provide a framework for recognition, intervention, and treatment of youth at risk of court involvement. In doing this, Project NOVA would serve as a common entry point for youth living within the city's enterprise community. After clients were screened and assessed, counselors were to refer them to treatment providers and grass-roots organizations in the Knoxville community. To accomplish these tasks, the project proposed to use an existing network of available services and to build the network by expanding capacity and enhancing coordination.

During the planning phase, project officials did not believe that enlisting the help and support of employers would pose a problem, even though many clients were offenders. In fact, officials pointed out in their grant application that the county Sheriff's Office and its Office of Community Alternatives to Prison Program had agreements with 154 employers, both inside and outside the enterprise community. "These employers have committed to hiring employees with arrest and prison records," according to the grant application.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

On January 1, 2001, Project NOVA staff members relinquished their Truancy Center duties to the city's Police Department and began devoting all of their time to the project. KCDC continued to manage the project, while CAC retained fiduciary control and oversight responsibilities.

By spring 2001, it did not appear that this change had affected client recruitment significantly. Proximity to the Truancy Center allowed the project staff to maintain ties with police and recruiting from the truancy program remained strong. In addition to the Truancy Center, the project was receiving referrals mainly from the school system, courts, and neighborhood networks in public housing developments. The project manager estimated that 10% of referrals also came from community service agencies.

Beginning with the inception of Project NOVA, the project staff recruited a variety of public, private, and non-profit partners. Before it received its demonstration grant, the Truancy Center already had in place existing agreements and arrangements with other agencies and organizations to provide services to youth. In all, about 30 agencies and organizations were listed in the Project NOVA grant application. These included primarily resources for substance abuse counseling, after school/mentoring programs, conflict resolution training, alternative sentencing/community service, alternative school/education, and job training.

Partners supported the project in various ways and degrees. A local One-Stop center provided Project NOVA clients some help in finding jobs and with job readiness training. An adult education/career specialist from the One-Stop, who also represented Pellissippi State, spent three mornings each week with project clients. Boys Clubs also provided some vocational readiness training, such as resume writing, interview skills, and how to dress for success in support of the project. Both Pellissippi State and Tennessee Technical College actively marketed and offered GED courses to project participants.

In November 1999, it was unclear whether the Drug Court, one of the project's original main partners, would continue to participate in the project. The evaluator at the time noted that uncertainty existed, although the Truancy Center and Drug Court had signed a memorandum of understanding. By October 2000, participation of the Drug Court in the project was virtually non-existent. Of 132 referrals reported at the time, for example, only one had come from the Drug Court. By spring 2001, the Drug Court had been disbanded as a result of a judge's order.

The program manager served on the youth council of the local Workforce Investment Board and the Knox County Safe Policies Group, whose members also included the Chief of Police, Sheriff, Superintendent of Schools, Chief Judge of Courts, and directors of 12 other organizations. A project case manager also served on the group. Membership in these groups ensured that the

project had high visibility and opportunities to build partnerships with other groups and organizations involved in community youth matters.

A key component of the project involved finding clients work. As a result, the project staff focused on securing commitments from employers to hire qualified youth who were enrolled as clients. Although the staff preferred placing clients in jobs with long-term potential, they did not object to placing them as workers in jobs that required only limited skills and education, such as those at fast food restaurants. Sometimes, they pointed out, these jobs lead to long-term employment, especially if clients continue to progress with their education, gain experience, and if they enter a supervisory track. According to staff, employers, through frequent contacts and other dealings, learned to appreciate the NOVA staff's professionalism and trust it to screen out applicants who were not suitable for certain jobs.

By spring 2001, the project had 30 participating employers, among them: Odom Construction, National Linen Service, Lay Packing Co., Modine Manufacturing, University Health Systems, Kroger Stores, Custom Foods, Ft. Sanders Regional Medical Center, Days Inn of America, and Interim Personnel.

There were problems placing clients in jobs, however, according to the program's manager. Some employers required at least a GED and many clients, who had long-term suspensions from school, were ineligible to enroll in GED courses until they completed their suspensions. Suspended clients often were placed into jobs while waiting for their suspensions to end. This situation meant that putting some clients through training, including GED courses, and into jobs took extended periods to accomplish. Another problem the project manager noted was difficulty in getting public schools to release students who probably would have benefited more by enrolling in the project than by remaining in school.

A real project strength was the active involvement of its advisory board. Board members, who mainly represented local industry, various public and non-profit agencies and colleges, came together monthly to share information and ideas on how they could improve the level of services provided clients. Board members represented Pellissippi State Technical Community College, the National Linen Service, Knoxville Community Development Corporation, Knoxville Police Department, the Board of Probation and Parole, Odom Construction Co., Tennessee Technology Center, Juvenile Court, Knox County Schools, the Metropolitan Drug Commission, and Knoxville Career Center. Goodwill Industries also joined the board. This was especially noteworthy because Goodwill's programs serve low-functioning children, which was the condition of many project participants. By spring 2001, two school system representatives, two parents, and a project youth also had been recruited for the board.

The advisory board was more active in spring 2001 than it was in November 1999. Board meetings generally were well attended, which on face value at least indicated that partners wanted the project to work. Board members elected a Knoxville police officer, who worked in the department's gang unit, as board president. At the September meeting she briefed board

members on the city's gang situation and also explained the various markings, signals, and clothing that different gangs used.

Throughout the project's course, the staff worked hard to expand Project NOVA's reach and to serve additional clients. In November 1999, the evaluator noted that the task of designing an integrated network of services was still being developed and that no interagency agreements had been reached, with the exception of a memo of understanding between the Metropolitan Drug Commission and the Truancy Center. By spring 2001, the project had in place memorandums of agreement/understanding with all its partners, according to the project manager.

Since 1999, the project made important strides in other ways. Shortcomings noted by the evaluator in November 1999 were corrected as the project staff developed confidence and the project became more stable. In October 2000, the evaluator found a knowledgeable and competent staff that appeared engaged with project clients. In addition, project staff members at the time also were attempting to build partnerships with potential employers and other public and non-profit organizations. By spring 2001, local Job Corps recruiters and two Job Corps sites in the Knoxville area had become active in the project.

Since 2000, the project received almost $370,000 in grant funding from various sources, which allowed it to expand its organizational capacity so it could reach additional clients. By spring 2001, project officials were in the process of hiring additional personnel (three full-time equivalents, or FTEs), which would increase the staff to a total of seven FTEs. The addition of two case mangers was necessary, according to the project manager, because each case manager was handling about 90 clients.

Of special note were the partnerships the project developed with Pellissippi State and Knox College. The colleges were to provide computer support and software in support of a HUD anti-drug program that provided the project about $125,000 in grant funds. Project NOVA in the summer of 2001 planned to hook up about 110 units of the 188-unit Ridgebrook Apartments with "wireless" computers that were either donated or purchased through the grant. This would allow project clients to engage in self-directed study and job searches while remaining at home to care for their families. Knox College, which had a one-year $40,000 contract with Project NOVA, also was to provide four students to run the computer system and also tutor middle and high school students in a new classroom. Pellissippi State was to provide GED software to the clients.

By spring 2001, project officials estimated that Project NOVA had reduced recidivism by providing youth with alternatives to unproductive behaviors. This was done through a comprehensive continuum of services that offered clients a safe and structured approach for exploring new opportunities. The project's original goal was to reduce recidivism by 20% in the target population. Of clients who were managed by the project since November 1999, officials said only 12.3% had been rearrested.

In addition, the staff anticipated there would be a 15% reduction in gang membership as a result of the project. The staff also reported that establishing strong partnerships with local business had allowed them to place 36% of 18 to 24 year-old clients in jobs.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

Proximity of Project NOVA to its target area was adequate. The project's main office was on the lower level of the L.T. Ross Building off Western Avenue. Space was shared with the Knox County School's Transition School and the Truancy Center, which was run by the Police Department after January 1, 2001. On the building's upper level were the Community Action Committee's (CAC) main offices where many services were provided to the public.

The project backed up to a large public housing project in the enterprise community, Ridgebrook Apartments. This meant that many youth who were at risk of court involvement had easy access to project services. It was uncertain, however, whether having project offices in the Ross Building, where the Truancy Center also was located, discouraged some potential clients from volunteering to participate in Project NOVA. To enter the building, clients had to first check in with a uniformed officer at a front desk.

Project NOVA, community-based organizations, and social service agencies at the Ross Building generally were accessible by public transportation. Project officials reported, however, that some clients often either refused to use it or did not know how to use it.

As a result of the staff expansion, the project's classroom in the Ross Building, where GED instruction was conducted, were displaced. By spring 2001 the classroom had been relocated to Ridgebrook Apartments. The new classroom accommodated up to 20 students at a time and abutted the new neighborhood network computer lab.

The new classroom was used throughout the day for various activities. From 9 a.m. until noon, Monday through Friday, Pellissippi State provided clients with basic skills instruction or GED preparation. From 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. the classroom was used for pre-school children and then, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., for tutoring of middle school and high school students. While enrolled in the project, clients received life skills, literacy, parenting, citizenship and employability skills training as well as English as a Second Language and other workforce development activities.

In the spring 2001, the project also established an office in the Knox County Juvenile Court and Services Building, primarily as a means to handle youth who were involved in gangs and other criminal activities. Project officials also planned to offer assessment services and some case management there.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

Staff members were recruited through advertisements in publications. Applicants were first screened and then interviewed before they were selected by a panel. The selection process appeared adequate and effective in ensuring that staff members were well qualified and well suited for the project.

By spring of 2001, the project had the full-time equivalent of four and one/half employees (a project director, three case managers, and two interns who were college students). In the summer of 2001, and after receiving additional demonstration grant funding from DOL, the project planned to add two and one-half positions, including two case managers, to handle a larger number of clients.

The project experienced only limited staff turnover. A case manager resigned in February 2000 and was soon replaced.

Project staff members were well educated, trained, and had considerable experience that complemented their project responsibilities. The program manager, who had been involved with youth issues in various agencies since 1985, for example, designed the Truancy Center in 1997 and put it into operation in 1998.

The three case managers also had experience dealing with needy youth. One case manager, for example, had worked in post-secondary vocational education for more than 20 years, teaching cosmetology, GED, basic skills courses, and welding classes. Before joining the project in August 1999, she worked as an administrator at Tennessee Technical College.

A second case manager joined the Truancy Center in February 1999. She had been involved in social work and teaching since 1978 and had worked several years teaching in family group homes. A third case manager, who joined the Truancy Center in February 2000, had worked in the mental health field, specifically in alcohol and drug abuse treatment, since 1995. She had experience as a case manager in both in-patient and out-patient facilities.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Referrals to Project NOVA come from several sources, including the Truancy Center, the public school system, courts, and neighborhood networks. The Truancy Center, however, was the primary referral source of youth 14-18 years of age.

Recruitment of clients also occurred sometimes by word of mouth. Youth attending GED or other training through the project, for example, sometimes encouraged their peers to join the program, according to project staff.

The number of youth identified as gang members increased from 247 in November 1998 to 330 at the end of 2000, according to project officials. Of those involved in gang activity, about 90% lived within the enterprise community. In all, about 70% to 75% of youthful offenders in the county lived there. In addition, Project NOVA officials reported:

- only 2% of the project's clients remained active in gangs once they became clients; and
- as many as 70% of project participants were identified as youthful offenders who were at high risk of joining gangs and engaging in related criminal activities.

In October 2000, the project staff was tracking or managing 132 clients, compared to about 40 in November 1999. By spring 2001 the number had increased to 207. Project staff believed that with additional case managers and support staff the project could manage as many as 400 youth. Staff members reported that they received a steady flow of inquiries about the project from youth. Interest in the project grew during the project's course, even though it received little publicity or media coverage.

In spring 2001, project officials said that they would not actively market Project NOVA until funding decisions had been made as to whether the project would receive additional funds from DOL after the grant ended. At the time, the program manager said it would be unfair to recruit youth into a program that would end in less than a year and before they could complete training or receive adequate services. With the announcement that the project would receive additional DOL funds as well as other grant funds, however, the project in the summer of 2001 planned to recruit and accept additional clients.

Before they became clients, youth were screened for suitability for the project. Those who had committed violent acts were accepted on a case-by case basis, but generally were excluded from participating in the project. A standard for enrollment was that a youth not pose a threat to other clients or the staff.

According to the project's original design, the Knoxville Drug Court was to serve as an important project partner and as a primary mechanism for funneling clients into the project. In the spring of 2001 a judge ordered that the Drug Court be discontinued.

8. What types of training, employment and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Project NOVA served as a common entry point for potential clients. After youth were assessed for their potential as participants — and if they volunteered to participate in the project — they were assigned to a case manager, who then developed an Individual Action Plan for each of them. As part of this process, which took up to three weeks to complete, case managers identified the needs of youth and then referred them to other agencies for help. Most referrals were for vocational and educational training. Clients also were referred to other agencies to help them handle personal problems, including drug abuse and family difficulties.

It appeared that the three case managers, despite handling large numbers of clients, took great pains to understand each client's needs, problems, and goals. A review of case management files in October 2001 gave an indication of the intense level of interaction that counselors had with youth. Case files, for example, showed that case managers frequently transported clients to job interviews and classes and prodded them to attend classes and other appointments. The counselors also helped clients try to resolve family and other personal problems.

Case managers indeed played a crucial role that went beyond simply assessing, classifying, and referring clients. The program director believed that an important role of the counselors was to keep youth from becoming lost in the system while providing them a safety net. They did this by constantly monitoring and reevaluating youth as they proceeded through the project. They closely tracked client progress and monitored whether they attended training and followed their Individual Action Plans. When potential problems were noted or "sensed" case managers responded quickly to take corrective action to get clients back on track. This extraordinary effort ensured, according to the program manager, that there was some kind of intervention "before disaster occurs."

As a conduit for 14-17 year olds, Project NOVA provided comprehensive psycho-social assessments and case management of youth who became clients. Once in the project, each client's progress was tracked for two years using links to juvenile and county courts, and regular reports from referring agencies.

Clients were watched closely for signs of bad attitude and whether they suffered from depression. If case managers suspected youth of being drug abusers, suffering from depression, or struggling with family problems they were referred to other agencies for help.

The local One-Stop center provided clients training in resume writing, job skills training, and vocational counseling. Project clients also received educational and vocational services from Pellissippi State and the Tennessee Technology Center.

Project clients had access to a youth sports program conducted through a partnership between KCDC and the City of Knoxville. Clients had access to a variety of recreational and sports activities, which project officials said enhanced their socialization skills and personal development and served as a violence prevention effort. Although the program was available to any young person between five and 16, it targeted those who lived in public housing.

A review of data provided by the project showed that of 207 clients who had enrolled in the project:

- 74 (36%) had been placed in unsubsidized jobs;
- 3 (2%) had joined the military;
- 24 (12%) had joined the Job Corps; and
- 6 (3%) had entered college.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

When necessary, counselors worked with other agencies to help clients overcome barriers to jobs, including obtaining appropriate work-related clothes. Frequently, however, counselors took it upon themselves to help youth obtain birth certificates, driver's licenses, and other essential documents.

Project officials said they found little interest among employers for the Federal Bonding Program or the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program. A common complaint was that the programs required too much paperwork, according to project officials.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

In the spring of 2001, there was a mild degree of uncertainty about the project's continuation. By summer, however, the project had received additional demonstration funds from DOL as well as two major grants worth more than $200,000 through the local Workforce Investment Board.

The grants appeared to ensure that the project would continue and grow while project officials continued their search for additional funding sources.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Minneapolis, Minnesota

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

Residents of neighborhoods targeted by the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) were largely working class. More than half also were members of minority groups, including a large number who had immigrated from Asia, Africa, and Mexico. More specifically, of the 49,000 residents who lived in the neighborhoods targeted by Fresh Start, the name of the demonstration project: 32% were black, 9.7% were Native American, 11.5% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3.7% were Hispanic.

Throughout the demonstration project, the unemployment rate in the target areas remained about 20%. Hardest hit were unskilled youth from economically disadvantaged families and immigrants who have not yet developed adequate English-language skills.

Compounding the situation was the movement of many large Minneapolis employers to the suburbs, which left behind mainly fast-food and service-related jobs for unskilled workers. When good-paying jobs were created in the downtown area, however, residents were not necessarily hired to fill them. According to city reports, non-residents held 60% of full-time jobs in Minneapolis. By May 2001, the economy, although still considered robust, had declined marginally.

To improve the job situation in struggling neighborhoods, city leaders pinned their hopes on three major projects in the city's revitalization plan. They believed that the projects would produce more than 7,000 jobs when they were completed.

As was the case generally across the nation, many good paying jobs in Minneapolis required well-educated and skilled workers. According to statistics compiled by the city, 89.6% of Native American students, 65.6% of black students, and 62.7% of Hispanic students failed to complete ninth grade.

The drop-out rate among minority groups steadily increased with the growth in the number of students from minority groups attending public schools. In 1990, for example, children of color constituted 40% of students. By 2000, that figure had increased to 70%. To combat the drop-out problem, the city initiated new mentoring programs that attempted to connect middle and high school youths with professional role models. Mentors also maintained contact with youth through email messages.

On the surface, the appearance of the demonstration project's main target neighborhoods gave a deceptive picture of their actual state of being. Compared to some neighborhoods in many other large cities, the areas where the YODP operated appeared neat and well maintained. It also appeared there was a shortage of affordable housing, which especially affected low-income families.

Beneath the facade of orderliness existed many of the same endemic problems involving youth that have troubled poor areas within other large cities. These included high unemployment, crime rates higher than national averages, and increased gang activity — including among recent immigrants. In all, project officials estimated that 80 gangs with about 4,500 members operated within the city. The officials said, however, that since the city began the project the crime rate had declined. This included a 53% decrease in the gang-related murder rate since 1998 when 13 deaths were reported. Officials attributed the drop to increased prosecutions of gang members and efforts of the anti-gang strike force.

Since 1999, the city has taken several actions that may have helped reduce crime. These included combining the principles of restorative justice with vigorous community action. Also, the city implemented several initiatives, including a general education program in schools, an alcohol education program, an anti-fire-setters program, a truancy intervention program, and a safe-schools initiative. The city also incorporated work/service into schools and was planning to establish a juvenile assessment center.

The political climate in Minneapolis throughout the grant period remained stable and generally unchanged. The mayor, like many other city and state organizations, supported efforts to improve employment opportunities for youth who were at risk of court involvement while also taking action to reduce juvenile crime and improve housing and education. The city has had a history of strong citizen participation and of developing public-private partnerships to create and implement citywide initiatives. In 2001 voters approved a significant increase in the amount of funds going to youth programs run by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

The city government's Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP) took the lead and organized efforts to apply for YODP funds. More specifically, the city's youth programs coordinator talked with potential partners to build consensus for the project. Greatest support for the project came from within the juvenile justice system, which also became the primary source of client referrals. Additional support came from community-based organizations, prospective employers, and school organizations. Although parents and youth were not included in planning for the grant, they were brought into the project once the youth council of the Private Industry Workforce Council was reformatted to meet requirements under the Workforce Investment Act.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

The City of Minneapolis, according to its application, planned to use its grant to create linkages "that will strengthen the efforts of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders and gang members, as well as, those youth who are on the fringes of both of these groups." In addition to supporting local gang suppression activities, the city planned to enhance services that already were provided through existing — and generally strong — employment and training, recreation, conflict resolution, youth intervention, and court diversion programs.

The city also planned to create services that complemented its existing alternative sentencing and community services options. To do this, it proposed developing a structured set of activities and services that would support 14-24 year olds in the targeted neighborhoods and lead to their successful long-term employment at good wage levels. Doing this was to help prevent involvement of youth in criminal activities and to reduce recidivism.

In planning for the project, METP solicited advice and help from about 10 organizations and public agencies. These included the public schools, churches, the Community Alternative Probation Supervision Program, correctional facilities for youth, and other organizations that provided services aimed at youth who were at risk of court involvement.

After it received its demonstration grant, the city planned to identify and select an agency through a competitive Request for Proposal process as subcontractor to manage the project's day-to-day operations. The city envisioned that its subcontractor would hire two community employment specialists and a job development specialist to work with METP to provide clients with:

- Transitional services for youth prior to their release from correctional facilities: The specialists were to help develop release plans with probation and social workers to ensure that the smooth transition of clients back into the community;

- Employment and training services: Specialists were to complete an Individual Service Strategy for each client and assess pre-employment and work maturity competencies. Appropriate training would then be scheduled;
- Job placement and support: Specialists were to place youth in appropriate jobs or internships, depending upon their eligibility; and

- Educational services: Specialists were to complete an Individualized Learning Plan for each client and establish short and long-term educational goals. They also were to help place clients in educational programs and link them with volunteer mentors.

When the city applied for the demonstration grant, it identified 23 businesses it said were willing to hire youth offenders. Some of the larger employers the city cited included: J.C. Penny's, Nodquist Sign, Print Star, Bell Manufacturing, Shapco Printers, Winslow Printing, Stremel Manufacturing, and Warning Lites of Minnesota.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

To manage the demonstration project, METP selected The Employment Action Center (EAC) as its subcontractor. EAC was well suited to manage Fresh Start's day-to-day operations because it operated similar programs aimed at helping youth prepare for employment and find jobs. EAC's organizational apparatus also was in place. In all, similar EAC programs reached about 700 youth by providing pre-vocational services and by helping them find jobs. EAC also operated similar adult programs that provided employment services to about 1,400 adult men and women a year.

Despite the agency's history of running these kind of programs, project officials early on found recruiting clients for Fresh Start difficult because the demonstration project had not established a track record in the community among probation officers. The project's staff worked hard to overcome this barrier, however.

In January 2000, Fresh Start officials reported there were five primary partners who referred clients to the project: Red Wing Correctional Facility, Project Support, Hennepin County Juvenile Probation, the Minneapolis Diversion Program, and the County Home School. By October 2000 the number of partners providing clients had increased to eight. Active partners project officials listed at the time included: Operation DeNovo, Project Support, Hennepin County Truancy, the Amicus Jump Program, Red Wing Correctional Facility, Hennepin County Probation, and the Juvenile Detention Center. By May 2001, project officials also listed South High School, 180 Degrees, and Volunteers of America Alternative School as sources of clients.

A strong link between Fresh Start and the traditional school system also was slow to develop. In general, project officials believed that the schools did not value the services provided by the demonstration project. Project officials, nonetheless, stressed that public schools were "cooperative" and that they sometimes worked with school social workers to identify youth who might benefit from Fresh Start.

The officials also reported that they hoped to build deeper relationships with schools, especially alternative schools, as the project matured. During the project, the Hennepin County School District operated six alternative schools, but most were run by community-based organizations. The schools were small, with 100 to 200 students, and enrolled students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

By October 2000, project officials and officials at the Hennepin County Home School, a medium-security facility, also were considering how they could develop a partnership. The school's corrections unit supervisor was seeking help from EAC to create a core curriculum of basic readiness skills for offenders nearing completion of their sentences. The corrections unit supervisor at the time said that if the curriculum were instituted in the school a major challenge would be to educate and convince facility workers that their responsibilities also included serving as job coaches and helping provide detained youth with job readiness skills. EAC officials also planned to train kitchen staff members who supervised youth working in the facility.

In addition, the facility's corrections unit supervisor supported implementation of a quasi-apprenticeship program for young men sentenced to the school. He believed that this kind of program, in which offenders would be allowed to work outside the facility for certain periods each week, would serve as a "decompression period" and help youthful offenders transition back into their communities more successfully.

By May 2001, Fresh Start officials still were attempting to build partnerships with additional employers of project youth. During the demonstration project, several employers had hired project clients, including Arby's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Adecco, the city's airport facility, Marsden Building Maintenance, Maximum Maintenance, Valvoline, DWS, United Parcel Service, and GFI. The list of business partners participating in the project, however, was much smaller than the list of 23 businesses the city identified in its grant application as willing to hire youth offenders.

Establishing firm partnerships with potential employers did not appear to be a critical task for the project, however. In general, the city's low unemployment rate made many employers, especially those that experienced high turnover rates and that needed unskilled workers, eager to hire workers from any source they could find. Firms that struggled with high turnover included janitorial services and fast food restaurants. It appeared, however, that employers requiring skilled workers outside the downtown area remained largely absent from the list of potential employers that were willing to hire Fresh Start participants.

Despite a generally tight labor market the project faced several other barriers placing clients into jobs. These included:

- the unwillingness of some employers to hire youthful offenders. (Some employers, however, were not aware of the offender status of some clients they hired and did not consult with project counselors for follow up when problems arose, which then apparently made them more reluctant to hire project clients.);

- poor skill level and lack of educational attainment by project clients to perform adequately on the job; and

- the unwillingness and lack of interest of some clients to be placed in jobs. Project staff reported that some clients, especially those who had been mandated to the project, were not interested in finding jobs.

Despite these kinds of issues, project staff, nonetheless, tried to reach prospective employers and convince them that Fresh Start could serve as a quasi-employment agency. In promotional literature, EAC explained that Fresh Start could qualify and screen candidates who were motivated to work. In addition, community employment and job development specialists could match clients' skills to employers' job needs. The service was touted as free "to BOTH the employer and the candidate" with foundations, corporations, government, and United Way picking up the tab for the placement services that were provided. The project, according to one brochure, would help employers reduce hiring costs. Specific benefits to employers listed by the agency included: access to qualified candidates, job retention services, support for Minneapolis Youth, and the federal bonding and tax credit programs.

Project officials also have used One-Stop centers, which for several years have actively publicized their services. As a result, officials pointed out, project clients were generally familiar with the services offered by the One-Stops, including placement into summer youth programs and subsidized private-sector jobs. To identify and help youth who were interested in finding jobs, project officials also worked toward establishing contacts with alternative schools and probation officers.

In addition to Fresh Start, Minneapolis, which project officials described as "a caring community," had many employment and anti-poverty programs that also sought to help youth at risk of court involvement. Fresh Start counselors used some of these services for their clients. As a result of having so many services and programs available for youth, however, there was some "friendly" competition for clients among the various agencies and groups. The following were some of the community organizations listed by METP that offered youth various opportunities and sponsored programs that helped them stay out of trouble:

- **Prevention:** Police Athletic League;

- **Diversion:** Boy Scouts Viking Council, Walker United Methodist Church, Community Alternative Probation Supervision Program, Project Turnaround, County School Support; and

- **Prevention and Intervention:** Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association, including City Inc., Minneapolis Youth Diversion Program, YWCA of Minneapolis, Project Support, Operation DeNovo, La Opportunidad Inc., Citizens Council, and Minneapolis American Indian Center.

In May 2001, project officials noted that they had made several changes and improvements to the project since it began:

- renaming the project "Fresh Start." A brochure developed to promote the project did not focus on the offender status of clients;

- adjusting the criteria for successful termination in educational activities that allowed a shorter time-frame; and

- offering non-monetary incentives (tickets to basketball games, etc.) for clients who attended school regularly, maintain their employment, and meet regularly with their mentor.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

METP selected EAC to manage the Fresh Start project in part because EAC's offices were situated within one of the grant's target neighborhoods. EAC's offices, which initially were on a main street that had good bus service and across the street from a large well-used park, were easily accessible to clients.

In early 2001 EAC moved its operations to a larger and more-modern facility several miles away from the old offices. The new office was on the fringe of the main target neighborhood. It remained accessible by bus to the target population. The larger facility also allowed clients to access multiple services in one location. Access for youth living in neighborhoods on the city's northside, however, was not as good. EAC officials also noted that the new facility operated in an area of the city that was "gang-neutral," although the neighborhood was considered to have a high-crime rate.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

The Fresh Start project coordinator was a former police officer who also had more than 10 years of experience in programs involving young offenders and youth at risk of court involvement. He replaced the original project coordinator in July 2000 when she resigned to take a similar job with another agency. Another staff member, an employment specialist, left her job in May 2000 and was replaced by a recent college graduate who had about 20 months of full-time experience working with youth sex offenders while she attended college. Another employment specialist joined EAC in January 2000. Before then, she worked eight months as a case worker at a treatment center for the mentally ill. These three employees were still with the project in May 2001.

Each of the two employment specialists, who were recruited by EAC through newspaper advertisements, managed about 75 client cases. Both also were certified offender employment specialists, having completed courses through the National Institute of Corrections to earn their

certificates. They planned to take career development facilitator courses worth six college credit hours.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

Fresh Start required that participants be youthful offenders or classified as youth at-risk of court involvement. Participants had to live in the targeted neighborhoods and be between 14 and 24. These requirements were somewhat flexible, however. Project officials claimed that they would not refuse to serve youth who lived outside of targeted neighborhoods, if they sought help. Indeed, one 13-year-old had enrolled in the project. There also were no income requirements for youth to participate in the project.

Clients were recruited from a variety of sources. The most important sources, however, were juvenile correctional facilities. Other agencies and organizations that provided clients included the Project Support mental health facility, group homes, the city's truancy team, traditional and alternative schools, and Operation DeNovo, a juvenile diversion program.

Several months after the project began, the city designated Fresh Start as a diversion program. As a result, the project received many referrals from juvenile and drug courts. Of the 82 case files maintained by project officials in October 2000, 59 (72%) youth were classified as offenders. By May 2001 there were about 130 clients, both court and other referrals, enrolled in Fresh Start. Project officials predicted that the number would increase gradually as the project progressed.

Several youth joined the project as a result of word-of-mouth publicity. Project officials called this form of recruitment, in which friends joined the project in pairs, "hidden referrals." In a sense then, according to the officials, the clients themselves had become important partners.

EAC prepared literature aimed at attracting youth as well as prospective employers to Fresh Start. In recruitment materials, Fresh Start explained to youth that it had the tools to help them achieve their educational and job goals. More specifically, Fresh Start could help them get a job, get a GED, return to high school, enroll in vocational/technical school, build self-esteem, develop job retention skills, and obtain bonding.

The expansion of referral sources that occurred beginning in 2000 had a positive effect on the project. Project officials believed it had become easier for them to find clients who were motivated to work and who were eager to participate in training and educational activities that were offered.

8. What types of training, employment and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Most youth entered Fresh Start at various points in their involvement with the juvenile justice system. Some came from prevention and early intervention programs while others entered the project as part of the terms of their probation. Project officials believed that gang activity had peaked in Minneapolis and, therefore, did not actively target gang members for the project.

When a youth was accepted into the program one of the two employment specialists conducted an assessment to determine the youth's readiness for employment. As part of the in-take process, clients also were assessed for their ability to complete forms properly. Service and educational plans were developed. After the assessment process was completed, the youth were referred to different programs and training modules, either inside or outside the project. (Case managers told the evaluator that they believed that the assessments were too long and tedious and should be refocused in a way that would help them more accurately pinpoint a client's likes and dislikes. This would help case managers better direct clients into the right kinds of training for jobs.)

Although no particular component or module was required, almost all youth attended two workshops taught by development specialists. One workshop focused on developing work skills and the other on developing maturity. If they needed special job-related services, such as tattoo removal or work-related clothing, they were referred to other agencies that could help. Fresh Start also provided clients with GED training.

After clients completed soft-skills and life-skills workshops, the employment specialists attempted to help them find jobs, that is if they met age requirements. The project provided clients with counseling and career workshops to help them learn how to make career decisions, build self-esteem, prepare for work by developing an education and employment plan and resume, find jobs, and retain their jobs. In addition, the project provided clients workplace mentors, access to job banks, and follow up services. The employment specialists believed, however, that clients generally needed more job readiness training than they received through the project.

Clients were offered three educational opportunities, if they had not completed their educations. They either could return to school, enroll in an alternative high school, or enroll in a Fresh Start GED program.

Project officials identified several barriers that impeded the successful implementation of the project's training and job placement components. According to counselors, many problems involved the youth themselves, specifically their low test scores and low educational attainment. Compounding these problems were other problems associated with poverty itself. These

included an acute housing shortage within the city that encouraged increased mobility in the target neighborhood. Project officials said that the housing shortage in the target neighborhood had the invidious effect of destabilizing less-affluent families.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that it was somewhat difficult for employment specialists to place project youth in jobs. According to the specialists, many youth faced transportation problems and found it difficult to travel to workplaces, especially to the suburbs where better-paying jobs were more plentiful. In addition, the skill levels required for many better-paying jobs often did not match the abilities and skill levels of Fresh Start clients, especially those who had not finished high school, who functioned at the elementary-school level, or who lacked adequate English-language skills. Counselors noted that many clients read at the elementary school level and could not pass tests required by some employers.

Another problem involved the mixing of school with work. Counselors noted that many full-time students found it too difficult to do both. Although they were not required to hold jobs, counselors reported that some participants were not motivated to seek work or to even agree to work, if they were accepted for employment. This sometimes occurred even when employers offered youth better-than-average wages. Indeed, notations by case workers in case files indicated that some youth failed to appear for interviews or failed to show for work after they are hired. To prevent these kinds of problems, case workers said they had to spend time calling and reminding the clients about their interview appointments or to show up for their jobs. Case workers also spent time transporting clients to interviews and training sessions, taking them to get a driver's license, and in general prodding them through training and the employment process.

There were other barriers to placing clients in jobs. Many clients, especially those moving to Minneapolis from other states, lacked proper documentation such as birth certificates, which slowed and frustrated efforts to find employment for them. Counselors, for example, noted difficulties in obtaining birth certificates from Chicago, which refused to accept personal checks from persons other than those requesting them. Most of these youth, however, lacked checking accounts.

Project officials also noted that cultural norms, especially for new non-westernized immigrants, sometimes conflicted with American work norms. Some Somalis immigrants, for example, were Moslem and strictly adhered to requirements that they pray five times daily.

Despite these kinds of problems, counselors by May 2001 noted that recruiting and retaining clients had become much easier than during the project's early days. According to counselors, youth had started to seek out the program and were sticking with it through training. Counselors also noted that the project was earning a good reputation among employers, who also showed increased eagerness to hire its clients.

Project officials concluded that there were adequate opportunities for youth to find jobs — that is, if they wanted to work. For the most part, employers supported youth-oriented programs such as Fresh Start although they did it mainly as "silent partners," according to project officials. Counselors began with the premise that jobs for clients could be found, although the project had received no blanket commitments from employers to hire youth from the project.

One employment issue that affected the project marginally, however, involved whether project officials should disclose information about convictions of clients to potential employers. Several clients, who did not disclose convictions on applications and subsequently were hired, were fired once their juvenile criminal records were discovered through background checks. The city attorney, in advising project officials on what to do, recommended that the officials not disclose convictions as part of the process of finding employment for clients. The city attorney, however, recommended that the officials inform clients that failure to disclose criminal information on an application sometimes could be grounds for dismissal. "With that information the participants . . . can make an informed choice when faced with the prospect of indicating whether they have a criminal record on an application," the city attorney explained.

Project officials attempted to track clients who secured jobs. They did this at regular intervals for one year. Doing this proved difficult and the project staff counted on probation officers to maintain contact with youth.

Of the 82 cases that were managed in October 2000, records at the time indicated that 22 clients were employed. Salaries ranged from a low of $2.75 an hour to a high of $12.50 per hour. Most wage rates, however, fell between $6.50 and $8.15 an hour. By May 2001, records showed that of 151 clients enrolled in the project:

- 59 (39%) were employed in unsubsidized jobs;
- 22 (15%) had been dropped for non-participation;
- 3 (2%) had completed their education; and
- 2 (1%) had either returned or remained in school.

Project officials believed that the project itself served as an anti-gang effort. Specifically they pointed to its focus on employment and education, which also had the effect of keeping youth busy and constructively occupied. They also believed that the project was valuable because it created a network in which peers could intermingle in a positive way. And, the project provided mentors to serve as positive role models for those youth who were employed.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Minneapolis clients were referred to other agencies for problems involving substance abuse, family difficulties, and personal counseling. When necessary, counselors also worked with other agencies to help clients overcome barriers to jobs, including removal of tattoos and obtaining appropriate work-related clothes. Frequently, however, case managers took it upon themselves to assist participants obtain birth certificates, driver's licenses, and other essential documents.

Project officials said they found little interest among employers for the Federal Bonding Program or the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program. Common complaints were that the programs required too much paperwork.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

EAC's parent organization, Resource Inc., was a large well-established non-profit organization that offered many different services throughout the city. Fresh Start officials used EAC's contacts and networks to nurture support for the demonstration project. Indeed, because EAC worked hard to integrate Fresh Start into its already well-defined organizational framework, EAC officials believed that continuing major components of Fresh Start would require only a minimal amount of additional financial support. In anticipation of continuing Fresh Start after its one-year extension and funding from DOL ended in 2002, however, EAC officials had applied for additional funding through several sources.

The city also was working closely with EAC to find ways to continue the project, once demonstration grant funds ended. According to the city's youth programs coordinator, one promising source of funding was the local Workforce Investment Boards. In addition to the YODP, EAC had a WIA contract to provide year-round services to youth who were at-risk of court involvement. City officials believed that with some modifications Fresh Start could be funded through WIA either as a stand-alone project or merged with other EAC programs. EAC planned to compete with other projects for WIA funds in 2002. The city's youth programs coordinator also believed that EAC had a good chance of being funded, based on its track record with Fresh Start and its other project involving youth at risk of court involvement.

The city had in place what appeared to be an effective continuous improvement mechanism. It required quarterly evaluations and yearly monitoring of projects it subcontracted to vendors. Each quarter EAC was given a letter grade for its performance based upon outcome indicators specified in the participant plan and statement of work the organization submitted with its RFP for demonstration project funds. This was reviewed by the METP director and submitted to the

City Council. Each year, METP was required to fully audit case files and records kept by all vendors. METP also periodically conducted a random verification of 20% of the case files.

In addition to the formal feedback mechanism that was in place, METP's director also was required to conduct informal discussions with all of METP's vendors about once a year to identify where changes and improvements in programs were needed. In the case of Fresh Start, this was done in November 2000.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Pensacola, Florida

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

The demonstration project, which was named Building Success, operated in Florida's Escarosa Region, or the state's western panhandle area that rests along the Gulf of Mexico. The project was operated by the Office of Juvenile Studies at the University of West Florida as a subcontract from the local Workforce Investment Board — Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Board, Inc. (ERWDB). Although the area's unemployment rate averaged only about 4% from 1999 to 2001, about 80% of families living in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties were identified as economically disadvantaged.

Tourism and a large military presence greatly influenced Pensacola's economy. During the period the YODP operated, about 30% of workers in the counties were involved in service industries; 22% in retail trade; and 20% in local, state, and federal government, including the military. Planners predicted that as this part of the state continued to grow there would be an increased need for workers to fill construction, maintenance repair, and related occupations.

From 1992 through 1997, the number of Santa Rosa juveniles charged with violent offenses increased 13.3%. By 2001, the overall crime situation appeared to have leveled off. As was the case in many other cities in the late 1900s, Pensacola experienced a decrease in violent crimes. Project officials, however, noted that during this period the city experienced a marginal increase in the presence of gang activity among Asian ethnic groups, which constituted a fast-growing segment of the area's population.

In general, however, gang activity did not pose a serious problem to the Pensacola community. Strong anti-gang efforts by law enforcement officials in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties drove much of the gang activity underground, which paradoxically made it more difficult to target gang members for inclusion in prevention programs, such as Building Success.

Leading efforts to revitalize and rebuild the demonstration project's targeted neighborhood, which also was an enterprise community situated in the inner-city, was the Greater Pensacola Front Porch Community Initiative. The grass-roots organization sought to empower residents and find solutions to the community's socio-economic problems.

Indeed the Front Porch community operated in a troubled area. According to 1990 census data, the community was comprised of about 13,000 residents who fell mostly into the low-income strata. The per capita income of the community was $9,429 compared to the $33,900 per capita national average. Unemployment in the area was about 6%.

Pensacola officials and leaders generally supported the Building Success project, according to project officials. Community-based organizations offered some support for the project's efforts to reach youthful offenders and youth at-risk of court involvement. One promising partnership the project developed in 2001 was with a charter school in the target area.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

The Office of Juvenile Studies (OJS) at the University of West Florida was the original proponent of Building Success. OJS approached ERWDB, the local Workforce Investment Board, and asked it to apply for the grant. Supporting partner organizations were those serving on the ERWDB. No formal planning board was established specifically for the project and there was no involvement of parents or youth, although they participated in focus groups that helped project planners identify needs and target some issues.

In planning for the project, OJS and ERWDB reached out to several agencies and organizations to serve as referral sources. These included the Children's Services Center, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the OJS Advanced Aftercare Services. The two lead partners also established contact with Communities in Schools (CIS) as a potential resource for fiscal management information and services.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

According to its grant application, the ERWDB sought demonstration grant funds to complement "an established innovative national demonstration model (Advanced Aftercare) that provides aftercare services for juvenile offenders who are returning to the community from residential juvenile justice commitment." Linking Building Success with Advanced Aftercare program, was to serve as a means to "break the cycle of recidivism" for youthful offenders and ensure long-term success, according to the grant application. More specifically, the project proposed to:

- Link established aftercare services with labor programs supported by the ERWDB;
- Enhance school-to-work initiatives for clients; and
- Enhance long-term employment opportunities at wage levels that offered meaningful career potential.

The project was divided into several phases, including start-up, planning, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation and adjustment. The project's start-up phase was to begin in January 2000; the implementation phase was to commence in August.

Building Success officials proposed that youth enrolled in the project receive services in two increments. During the first increment, youth were to get school-to-career planning, employability training, entrepreneurship education training, and pre-apprenticeship job coaching. As part of this increment, public schools in coordination with Pensacola Junior College were to provide "enhanced access to long-term education and training opportunities facilitated through the local school-to-work initiatives . . ."

During the project's second increment, youth were to receive individualized services and job placement. Job coaches were to assist clients who were either attending school or who were out of school. These clients would be eligible for summer employment and school-year work experience opportunities sponsored by employers in the Escarosa Service Delivery Area. In support of this, the project was to provide:

- community service volunteer placements through Advanced Aftercare;
- career job placement and job coach assistance to out-of-school youth; and
- long-term placement assistance and monitoring to clients through field placement advisors.

When project officials applied for the YODP grant they stressed that they already had identified building trade employment opportunities to support the project's training services and long-term employment goals. They noted that private sector commitments had been obtained in construction, maintenance repair, services, and related manufacturing. In addition, they reported that the state had assured them that the project would receive assistance through the Florida Building Code Commission to help them secure additional commitments from building trade associations and the Florida Home Builders Association.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

The Office of Juvenile Studies (OJS) was the lead agency and managed the day-to-day operation of Building Success, although ERWDB retained broad oversight of the project. Throughout the project OJS served as the primary motivating force and facilitator for engaging the broader Pensacola community and bringing partners into the project. The project director, a tenured faculty member of the University of West Florida, also served on the youth advisory council run by the ERWDB. This put him in contact with potential partners and gave Building Success high visibility.

In 2001 project officials worked toward improving the project's relationship with local public schools, although with only marginal success. According to project officials, public schools for various reasons, including those that were political, demonstrated low tolerance for troublesome youth. As a result, suspensions of difficult students from schools tended to come swiftly.

The project had little success placing youth released from commitment facilities into programs that operated through public schools. These included, for example, the Youth Employment Training Program (YETP) and the Summer Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP). A major problem was that many released juveniles either were not permitted to return to their high schools where the programs operated or they were not permitted to enter into the training programs, even if they were allowed to return to school. Youth who fell into certain categories also generally were not allowed into the programs, if their categories had a high dropout rate. It appeared that program administrators feared that the federal government would cut funds for the program, if completion rates fell below 80%.

There were some limited successes with public schools, however. The Santa Rosa County schools provided accounting services for the project, including issuing checks to project participants for the profits they earned from sale of the products they produced. And, access to public school records of potential project participants became more open to project officials trying to identify youth who might benefit from Building Success. Project officials also looked toward building stronger relationships with alternative and charter schools, rather than regular high schools, to find potential project participants.

In September 2000, the evaluator noted that project officials had experienced some successes in strengthening linkages and partnerships with other area agencies, organizations, and industries. In addition to its partnership with the Santa Rosa County Schools, Building Success established partnerships with:

- Southern Hardwoods, a private Pensacola firm, which supplied surplus hardwoods to clients who produced doll house furniture and small pre-school furniture for sale to child care centers as part of their entrepreneurial efforts;
- Home Depot, which provided clients with wood and provided some training within its sites;
- Habitat for Humanity, which partnered with the project to produce bird houses that were then sold; and
- Northwest Florida Homebuilders Association, which provided project officials access to job sites and employment leads for clients. The association also publicized the project in newsletters that were sent to members.

Noticeably absent from the project's partners were Pensacola churches, which in many other communities, such as Knoxville, Tennessee, developed strong aftercare and other programs for youth. According to project officials, many Pensacola churches were conservative, advocated harsh punishments for offenders, and generally were reluctant to establish programs aimed at troubled youth or that attempted to rehabilitate offenders. Project officials also reported they approached Junior Achievement about building a partnership, but the organization was unwilling "to go outside their cloister" and become involved with Building Success that, unlike Junior Achievement, served mostly youth from less-affluent families.

Project officials, nonetheless, said that they believed that the level of participation by grassroots groups, especially the Front Porch Florida Initiative, held promise. Front Porch, a large and effective organization had set up operations in the project's target neighborhood and taken the lead in offering neighborhood youth mentors and providing them with community service opportunities aimed at improving their neighborhood.

By May 2001, two important and promising developments had occurred for the demonstration project. First, OJS had established a new partnership with the Pensacola Academy of Success, one of the city's three charter high schools. About 150 students in the demonstration project's target area were served by the school. The charter school opened in 1999, served grades 9-12, and sought to educate students who were at risk of not completing high school. It also sought to provide students career guidance while providing them an applied and integrated curriculum that demonstrated the relationship between what they learned and life experiences. Five teachers at the school also were ordained ministers who lived in or near the community.

The school, whose student population was 67% male, also had applied for funds to become a YouthBuild site. If approved, the school proposed to teach construction skills to 20 young people, ages 16-24, who were from predominately low-income families and who were unemployed. The city already had committed to providing land for construction and the county promised to provide $40,000 worth of materials. Eventually the school hoped to provide a mass media curriculum for other students.

In support of the academy, the demonstration staff planned to provide the students, who also would enroll in the demonstration project:

- assessment and referral services;
- career workshops;
- entrepreneurship education;
- vocational shop/construction trades training. OJS would provide the services of a full-time vocational education teacher who would teach clients how to construct homes; and

- leadership training. This would include a challenge "ropes" course to facilitate team-building and decision-making skills.

The second major development was the securing of an agreement through juvenile judges, state attorneys, probation units, and public defenders that allowed youth to avoid formal judicial processing for certain technical violations of probation. The arrangement gave non-judicial powers to organizations providing aftercare services, such as the OJS aftercare program, to handle technical violators in their programs without having to turn to judges. In lieu of jail, for example, aftercare providers could order technical violators to perform community service with Habitat for Humanity, 4-H Clubs, Animal Shelters, and churches. Project officials hoped to include the Front Porch initiative as another option.

Since September 2000, there have been several other developments that either strengthened or held promise of improving Building Success. These included:

- developing a partnership with Habitat for Humanity in which Building Success clients participated in the construction of homes for low-income families;
- receiving a contract modification from DOL to abolish the youth employment specialist position authorized in the original grant. Project officials instead planned to use funds designated for the position to provide transportation services and incentives (stipends) for participants;
- receiving a one-year no-cost extension for the demonstration from DOL to continue the project through the summer of 2002;
- planning to better integrate Building Success with the OJS Advanced Aftercare program.
- planning to increase its $15 per week stipend to $20 per week for youth enrolled in the demonstration project through the OJS aftercare program.
- developing further the entrepreneurial aspects of the project in which participants took "ownership" of the project and ran it more like a business and shared profits from the sale of items they produce. In May 2001, the staff also was looking at ways to improve production and increase sales of doll house and other furniture clients produced.

Throughout the demonstration, project officials sought to become members of organizations and groups that offered the potential to strengthen Building Success. In addition to serving on the local Workforce Investment Board's youth council, the project manager belonged to the advisory board of the Pensacola Academy, which was affiliated with the Front Porch Initiative. In

addition, the project coordinator belonged to the Juvenile Justice Council, the Chief Judges Council, and the Gang Taskforce. She also chaired the Girl's Initiative. In addition, the project staff also worked to recruit employers who potentially could hire project clients. Project officials also made presentations to the HomeBuilders Association of Northwest Florida, the American Subcontractors Association, and the Port of Pensacola.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

Building Success was situated on the UWF campus, which was in the northwest suburbs about 10 miles from the city's heart. Project officials had considered moving Building Success closer to the target neighborhood, but the staff decided there were several advantages to keeping the project where it was. The campus, for example, was considered neutral territory for gangs that operated farther south toward the inner-city. Another advantage was the presence of a well-equipped wood-working shop on the campus. The shop, which fell into disuse in the 1990s after the university discontinued its program for training high school and middle school shop teachers, was made available to Building Success.

Throughout the project, transportation to the university remained a persistent problem for youth entering the project from the Advanced Aftercare program. The situation was alleviated somewhat by having university students transport clients to and from the campus. Participants in the Blackwater confinement facility also had to travel about 40 miles to use the facility twice a month for training.

The creation of a new partnership with the Pensacola Academy of Success would take the project into the enterprise community and the project's target area where the charter school is situated. A new full-time vocational instructor at the school, although a project employee, would work out of the school and serve up to 20 clients.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

Staff members for Building Success came mainly from within the OJS and were shared with other programs run by OJS. The director of operations at OJS, who urged EWDB to apply for the YODP grant, was a tenured faculty member at UWF who oversaw Building Success. To fill vacant positions, OJS recruited through the state university system. Advertisements also were posted on the World Wide Web and in various publications.

Several important staff changes occurred over the project's course. The first project coordinator, a doctoral student who worked in the OJS, left the office in August 2000 and was replaced by another OJS employee who also was pursuing a doctorate in education. In addition to serving as Building Success coordinator, the staff member also served as assistant coordinator of Advanced

Aftercare. The staff member spent about 20% of her time on Building Success and 80% working with Advanced Aftercare.

Recruiting other staff members for the project proved somewhat more difficult. After about a year, the position of youth employment specialist was dropped along with two part-time field adviser positions. The positions were abolished because there was little interest in the jobs, apparently because of the area's strong economy.

Building Success, as well as the Blackwater Career Center, a medium-security facility for youthful offenders, and the OJS Advanced Aftercare program depended heavily upon about 15 advanced undergraduates and graduate students who worked mainly for academic credit. Turnover among students, however, was high and increased during times when classes were not in session. Students served as mentors, teachers, and counselors. They often drove project participants to and from training, and helped them get a driver's licenses and work-appropriate clothing.

The project also hired a part-time shop teacher, a retired Navy chief petty officer who ran the crafts shop at local Navy bases. The instructor also worked as a teacher at an area vocational-technical center. In May 2001, project officials planned to replace the part-time shop teacher with a full-time vocational education teacher who held a teaching certificate. Project officials were considering whether to hire part-time supervisors to assist the vocational teacher, who was to work out of the Pensacola Academy for Success.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

The relationship of OJS programs and sharing of their staffs ensured that the project received clients from two reliable sources: the Advanced Aftercare program and the Blackwater Career Center. During the project's first year in operation, it appeared that without these two sources the project would be hard pressed to continue. By September 2001, a total of 12 youth had participated in the project. At the time, five youth were participating in wood shop and project officials planned to screen an additional five or so referrals for inclusion in the program. By May 2001, the project had enrolled 40 clients. In addition, three clients were enrolled in pre-employment and educational training while five clients were enrolled in GED or other academic educational programs.

To a large extent, project recruitment focused on juvenile justice and alternative sentencing programs, including intensive diversion and residential commitment programs. The project also by May 2001 had begun to recruit at local recreation centers, including one in the enterprise community.

The original concept for Building Success was for cohort groups consisting of 15 youth to start their training together. But recruiting an adequately sized cohort proved difficult, so this

approach was not used. Out of necessity, project officials became more flexible and allowed youth to enter the program as individuals and at varying times.

The original proposal also intended to take most clients from the Advanced Aftercare program. This approach also did not work because many aftercare youth either lacked transportation or already worked or attended school as a condition of probation. Project officials believed that the new partnership with the Pensacola Academy of Success, and improved integration into the OJS aftercare program, would ensure that the demonstration project had a larger stream of clients in the future.

8. What types of training, employment and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

As designed, project clients went through two increments of training as they participated in Building Success. During the first increment, youth received pre-job training that consisted of career planning advice, coaching and training at the university's wood shop and elsewhere. Youth attending Building Success from the Blackwater facility, for the most part, already had received some elementary wood working experience at the facility as part of their training programs. Shop equipment at Blackwater, however, was in limited supply and less sophisticated than the equipment at UWF. Although youth from the Advanced Aftercare program and the Blackwater facility used the same wood shop at UWF, they were segregated from each other and attended training at different times or on different days of the week.

Project officials believed exposing Blackwater youth to the project before they were released was important because many might continue participating in Building Success after they were released and entered into the Advanced Aftercare program. Project officials also believed that this type of training, as well as culinary training provided at Blackwater, would build self-esteem and could be used to teach proper on-the-job behavior and improve the employability skills of youth. In addition, the training would show parents that their children could succeed. This in turn would help develop a closer bond between parent and child.

As it matured, Building Success sought ways to provide youth additional training. By May 2001, OJS had partnered with Habitat for Humanity. As a result, about seven youth serving at Blackwater were spending one day a week building houses. One supervisor at Blackwater said that youth working on the project were enthusiastic and that he had been approached by several others wanting information about joining the Habitat project. Apparently the youth preferred working on houses to working in the facility's wood shop. Project officials said they hoped to expand the program, dividing the time of two groups of youth between wood shop and on-site construction while integrating the training with GED preparation.

Helping clients become employable posed a serious problem for project officials throughout the demonstration period. In the case of Blackwater youth, for example, project officials estimated that one-half were either developmentally delayed or performed below their age-appropriate grade level. In all, project officials estimated that from 35% to 45% of youth involved in the juvenile justice system experienced these same problems. For Building Success, that meant a large percentage of clients had special needs because they were ill-suited to continue more formal academic paths. Finding ways to provide adequate services that provided remedial writing and mathematics skills was a problem faced by project officials.

During the project's second increment, clients were encouraged to find day jobs or to enter into additional training programs. Placing youth in construction jobs posed a special problem, although the project found jobs for 22 (55%). Strict employment guidelines, for example, prohibited placing those under 18 into construction work in which they were required to operate power tools or to work more than six feet off the ground. Employers who expressed a strong interest in the program were concerned about possible liabilities.

It was uncertain how the local One-Stop center could assist youth under 18 who faced learning difficulties and who wanted only to find a job. According to Workforce Investment Board officials, state rules required that they be funneled back into academic programs leading toward either a high school diploma or GED. As a result, the center was unable to help the youth find employment. The dilemma for Building Success was how to help those young people under 18 who rejected formal schooling, or who had low aptitudes or skills, find jobs that offered them long-term employment at livable wages.

Project officials participated in local anti-gang and community efforts by serving on several councils. Staff members, for example, were on juvenile justice councils, the Chief Judges Council, the Girls Initiative, and the Gang Task Force. Project officials also participated in planning and implementation efforts of the Florida Front Porch Coalition that was attempting to revitalize the enterprise community.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

The Building Success staff attempted to help clients who had personal problems and needs both directly and indirectly. When possible, the staff assisted clients with obtaining vital documents, a driver's license, transportation, community service opportunities, and appropriate work-related clothes. The staff also counseled and referred clients for mental health and physical health issues. Help from the project's staff was available around the clock; staff members were on call to help.

Building Success officials found little interest among employers for the Federal Bonding Program or the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program. Common complaints were that they required too much paperwork.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

UWF officials hoped to bind Building Success more strongly with the Advanced Aftercare, the Blackwater confinement facility, and the Pensacola Academy for Success before the demonstration project ended in the summer of 2002. The officials also anticipated that OJS would receive additional grants to support the project, or at least elements of it. The staff had a solid record of success in transforming grant projects, such as the Advanced Aftercare program, into permanent programs through funding by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

In addition, the new fiscal budget for the OJS aftercare program was restructured in spring 2001 to reflect OJS's hopes for continuing the project after demonstration funds end. As a result, the aftercare program planned to pay at least half the cost of a full-time vocational instructor who would work with the Pensacola Academy for Success teaching construction skills to students, who also would enroll in Building Success.

OJS had in place an adequate continuous improvement mechanism. ERWDB monitored the project and provided some feedback. Assessments were based on monthly reports and the project's management plan.

Youth Offender Demonstration Project
Process Evaluation
Final Report Summary for
Rockford, Illinois

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?

The Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP), which was incorporated into YouthBuild Rockford, operated in the state's second largest city. Rockford, which is about 60 miles west of Chicago, is in Winnebago County. At the time of the demonstration, the county had about 268,000 residents and covered 514 square miles.

Of Rockford's 143,000 residents, 81% were white and 15% were black. The city's median household income was $35,172; its unemployment rate stood at 6.4%; and its poverty rate for ages 18 to 24 was 18%. About 40% of the city's households also qualified for some form of public assistance.

Project participants came from 10 census tracts that constituted an economically depressed area, which also qualified as an enterprise community. Minorities comprised 48% of the zone's households that had an average income of $20,878 a year. Indeed, this was a troubled area: its poverty rate was 37%, its unemployed rate was 21%, and its high school dropout rate topped 13%.

Of youth between 16 and 19 years old, 20% either were not enrolled in school or lacked a job. The education figures were particularly troubling, considering that 33% of available jobs in the Rockford area required training beyond high school.

Crime rates in the county reflected problems associated with urban economic difficulties. Although the percentage of violent crimes in the county decreased somewhat after 1994, drug arrests had increased steadily. Rockford police estimated that 28 separate street gangs with about 1,500 members operated within the city.

By 2001 several contextual changes had marginally affected the demonstration project. Rockford's economy had weakened slightly, and the local school district had proposed closing its largest program for youth with behavioral disorders. In addition, Winnebago County had eliminated its Juvenile Justice Task Force. Also, the county's Juvenile Assessment Center, which served youth under 17, also was in danger of losing its funding.

Since 1989 the public schools have operated under a court-ordered desegregation plan. According to the demonstration project's program manager, the desegregation plan had a divisive effect and had cost the city millions of dollars in legal fees. As a result, the city had to raise property taxes and curtail some services, including those aimed at disadvantaged youth. In

addition, he pointed out, the city had neglected the truancy and dropout problems that were endemic in public schools. There was some hope that this situation would change, however. An appeals court planned to grant unitary status to local government in 2002, which would remove the courts from the desegregation issue. There also were in place new school board members and a new superintendent from Milwaukee, who said he intended to focus more on the truancy issue and to reinstate vocational education programs, which largely had been abandoned.

The city also had a new mayor, a former state representative, who was elected in April 2001. He campaigned on a platform that included increased community development. The mayor also was a strong supporter of YouthBuild, which managed the demonstration project.

2. How did the community planning bodies or councils, charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services, function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?

Officials with YouthBuild Rockford and the Rockford River Training Corporation wrote the proposal and applied for the YODP grant. Members of 25 different groups and organizations serving on YouthBuild's community advisory board participated in planning for the YODP.

By June 2001, the advisory board included as members two parents and two YouthBuild trainees. In December 1999, the advisory board was reconstituted as a community advisory board. Members included representatives from education, vocational training programs, the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the Attorney General's Office, the business community, county Juvenile Justice, and local law enforcement. The advisory board also advised the project about its efforts to become a charter school.

3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?

The proposal submitted to DOL by the Rockford River Training Corporation indicated that the YODP grant would be used to "both expand and enhance the YouthBuild Rockford services consistent with the target population. . ." More specifically, the demonstration project was to serve 16-24 year olds in YouthBuild who came primarily from low-income families and who were high school dropouts.

YouthBuild, which received funds through a subcontract to manage the demonstration project from Rock River Training Corp., a former Private Industry Council, was to target 10 census tracts that had been designated as an enterprise community by the State of Illinois. The area was the most severely economically distressed area in the city.

At the time of its grant application, YouthBuild Rockford had agreements with several public and private organizations that supported its program by providing funds or services: the City of

Rockford, Rockford Housing Authority, Rock Valley College, Rockford public schools, the State of Illinois, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Corporation for National Service, the Center on Crime, Community and Culture, several local building trade partners, private employers and businesses.

4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?

The project built on the strong YouthBuild structure that was put in place in 1995. It was part of the national YouthBuild program that was founded in 1978 in New York City. At the time of the demonstration project there were 165 YouthBuild sites nationwide. Since the late 1970s, about 20,000 young people, ages 16 to 24, have built more than 7,000 housing units for homeless and low-income families as part of the YouthBuild effort.

It appeared that YouthBuild Rockford, which was operated by Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc., was a sound choice to run the demonstration project. The organization had experience operating a similar pilot, the Youthful Offender Program, with funds it received through the old Rock River PIC. Of the 23 clients enrolled in that pilot, 16 (70%) completed the project. Of the those who finished, six were placed either in jobs or educational programs. Also, in 1996 YouthBuild Rockford was selected as an AmeriCorps site.

The original project plan was to enroll 30-35 trainees during the first year and around 40 trainees during the second year. During the first year, 23 students graduated and, at the time of the second evaluation site visit, project officials were preparing to enroll another 40 for the fall 2000. At the end of the second cycle, which ended on July 1, 2001, 27 trainees had graduated from YouthBuild.

Major components of the YouthBuild training program included:

- **Job Training.** Trainees learned construction or manufacturing skills from qualified journeymen trainers and spent 16 hours a week on the job. The project also provided job shadowing and internship for clients. Up to 50% of job placements resulted from internships.

- **Education.** After testing and assessment, trainees took classes to prepare for the GED. Those who held high school diplomas, however, were given remedial work, if needed, to help them prepare for work requirements. Trainees also received employability, pre-apprenticeship, and life skills training. It should be noted that some trainees required up to 18 months of training to become prepared for employment.
- **Leadership Development.** Trainees shared in governing the program through an elected policy council. Leadership skills were taught and clients were expected to participate in community service activities on Fridays.

- **Youth Development.** Trainees were helped to achieve self-sufficiency through a combination of personal and career counseling, support groups, cultural and recreational activities. The YMCA provided passes to trainees and the project had a softball team that competed in a local park league.

The main result of funds provided by the demonstration project was to allow YouthBuild to expand its existing vocational tracks and, therefore, add more clients. In doing this, according to project officials, YouthBuild was able to take positive steps toward becoming a charter school. Officials believed the school system would approve charter school status by fall 2001, which would provide $7,000 for each student who enrolled in YouthBuild. This further would strengthen and expand the program's existing services.

Another benefit that resulted from demonstration grant funds was that YouthBuild was able to detect and begin to fill gaps in services that it provided clients. Along these lines, the program's immediate goals included developing transitional housing, attaining substance abuse treatment for clients, and providing job training in career fields that might lead to better-paying jobs, such as those involving computers. Program officials also believed there was a strong need for aftercare services, perhaps residential, for youth reentering the community from correctional institutions.

At the time of the first evaluation site visits, the evaluator observed that the project had not made large-scale efforts to reach out to the greater community, beyond the organizations that already were participating in YouthBuild. The evaluator noted one major exception, however. Early on YouthBuild established a new partnership with the Abilities Center, which was operated by Goodwill Industries. By September 2000, this partnership had matured with the addition of a YouthBuild cohort of trainees that was learning manufacturing skills.

The Abilities Center specialized in vocational programs for low-income and unemployed adults with disabilities. In the case of YouthBuild, the center provided 36 weeks of manufacturing training and computer training to project clients. Those in the manufacturing track were taught how to operate machines that made screws, hinges and other fasteners. There was some demand for these workers in Rockford, which throughout its history served as an important industrial and manufacturing center. By June 2001, the Abilities Center had opened an expanded training facility in a refurbished World War II building that tied together three Quonset huts.

And, by that time, YouthBuild had established a new partnership with the University of Illinois Extension Service. It also had partnered with Project Success and the "Who Am I?" program to provide an alcohol, drug, and violence abuse prevention program for first through third graders in public schools. The program used YouthBuild and AmeriCorps trainees as instructors to teach communication skills to young children to help them change their self-perceptions. This in turn helped lead to healthier family relationships and bring about cultural change. YouthBuild

also had established a new partnership with the Rockford Housing Authority and Energy Masters International to provide training and employment in jobs involving energy conservation.

Support for YouthBuild among employers and unions was strong, according to the project manager, who also was YouthBuild's executive director. In all, YouthBuild successfully placed 86% of youth completing the program in either jobs or educational programs, according to statistics compiled by the program.

By June 2001, seven trade unions as well as businesses had provided classes and other training for clients. Home Deport, for example, provided classes on construction and offered a job shadowing program for clients. The project also had established a new link with the Road Builders Service Project that trained clients who were interested in highway construction.

In addition, companies that comprised an employers network of 150 provided job shadowing, internships, and jobs to project clients. And, the Rockford Chamber of Commerce also provided activities and attempted to help trainees find jobs. To encourage participation in the project, YouthBuild each year holds an employer recognition luncheon for businesses that have given clients jobs. The challenge for the future, according to the project manager, was for YouthBuild to develop partnerships with companies that provide technical services.

YouthBuild officials have worked hard to increase support for the program. Since January 2000, the program manager, and two YouthBuild graduates, have joined the local Workforce Investment Board's youth council. The program manager also joined the state youth council and served as a member of a statewide coalition of YouthBuild programs and supporting organizations that was attempting to expand the number of programs in Illinois. The result of efforts to link the program more fully with the workforce development system was that YouthBuild received increased funding. In 2000, for example, the program received $80,000 through WIA. In early 2001 it also had received another $169,000 grant through WIA.

The project manager noted, however, that WIA had caused some enrollment problems for the YouthBuild staff. Bureaucratic requirements were intense and burdensome, he said, and quite often they did not match those of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As an example, the project manager explained that although HUD required only one enrollment form for YouthBuild trainees, WIA required 14.

Several "program enhancements" were made to YouthBuild during the first two years the project was in operation. In September 2000, the evaluator noted that enhancements included new academic electives (Spanish and landscaping), more access to computer technology for trainees, and additional opportunities for community service. In June 2001, the project manager was planning to add a computer technology track to the project's construction and manufacturing tracks. During the summer of 2001 project officials were preparing to rework the curriculum for the next cycle of clients that was scheduled to begin in October.

The project manager also said he was not satisfied with the GED completion rate for clients and that during the summer retooling period the staff would look at how to improve outcomes, perhaps by establishing stronger links with colleges to provide academic training. This was especially important because the State of Illinois was in the process of tightening GED testing requirements and standards.

Several promising developments occurred after January 2000: YouthBuild was awarded a $25,000 grant from G-Tech Communications, a local company, to outfit a computer lab to link the program with an after-school program. And, YouthBuild received $150,000 from DOL to continue the YODP for another year. In all, it appeared that YouthBuild in 2001 would receive about $5 million in funds and in-kind contributions from various sources.

The project faced several programmatic barriers. The project staff had a high turnover rate, although the project director pointed out that it was "average" compared to similar programs that paid staff relatively low wages. There also were unique challenges involving how the construction industry operated. Inclement weather, for example, stopped training for days and caused coordination problems among the staff who had to find ways to keep clients engaged.

About the time of the first evaluation site visit in January 2000, there also were problems involving the project's incentive program (Individual Development Accounts). The accounts served as a savings plan for clients to complete their training and reach goals such as GED attainment, academic improvement, attendance, job or school placement. Disbursement to the accounts ranged from $600 to $945. At the time the evaluator noted that bureaucratic, including accountability, requirements caused delays in disbursement. This resulted in a demonstration at the facility and threats to project officials. It also left bad feelings on the part of some students and staff members, according to the evaluator.

5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?

YouthBuild was in an old electricity company transfer and maintenance station. The facility was situated centrally in the community where the target population lived. Also operating in the building was a food bank, where project trainees also could complete requirements for community service hours.

A bus stop was two blocks away and the main bus terminal was within walking distance. Project officials noted, however, that getting to the facility proved difficult for some trainees and that taxi drivers sometimes were reluctant to enter the neighborhood where the project was situated. In June 2001, project officials were hoping to relocate to a more modern and appealing site that would provide better offices and classrooms and allow for expansion and job shadowing of participants. The new location also would remain accessible to project clients.

6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?

Key project positions included: Project director, director of programs, vocational coordinator, case manager, applied academics instructor, community service coordinator, employment coordinator, and VISTA program assistant. Before joining YouthBuild and Comprehensive Community Services, Inc., the YODP project director served 12 years as a probation officer in Winnebago County.

Two positions were added, in part, as a result of funding that YouthBuild received through the YODP grant. These included the case manager and a program assistant. In addition, a percentage of time from other YouthBuild staff positions supported the demonstration project.

The staff experienced some turnover during the project's course. The director of programs was new to that position at the time of the initial site visit in January 2000. Since then, the employment coordinator joined the staff as a replacement hire. In addition, a former program director who left YouthBuild for a time rejoined the staff as vocational coordinator. As a result, the vocational coordinator became community service coordinator. In all, YouthBuild had the equivalent staff of 15 full-time employees, plus several volunteers and temporary workers.
Staff members received adequate training to perform their duties. The program director attended training with the national YouthBuild program and attended a workshop sponsored by the AmeriCorps program. The employment coordinator also attended a conference in New York on how to find jobs for hard-to-place clients. And, the vocational coordinator attended seminars on collaborations and substance abuse training.

The director of programs also facilitated in-service staff development training. One session, for example, included confidentiality issues and the other discussed clinical boundaries and how to maintain professional relationships with clients. The director of programs also planned to address teaching techniques, crisis intervention, and other ethical issues involving clients.

7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?

YouthBuild used flyers as a primary means to recruit participants. In the spring of 2001, for example, the project distributed about 1,500 flyers door-to-door and posted some on bulletin boards in targeted areas. In addition, youth who applied for YouthBuild in previous years, but who were not admitted into the program, also were sent information and invited to reapply.

In 2000, there were about 65 potential trainees who attended orientation. About 100 prospective clients were placed on a waiting list because the project could not accommodate them. In June

2001, officials said they were hoping for that number again by October when a new trainee cycle was scheduled to begin.

The project attempted to recruit youth who were unaware of YouthBuild because of their race, sex, ethnicity, disability, or because they were not being served by public or private social service agencies. This was done by placing advertisements in newsletters, church bulletins, and neighborhood association publications. In addition, informational meetings were held and public service announcements were run by local television and radio stations.

During past years, according to data compiled by YouthBuild, more than 650 young people applied for admission to the program. Of these, 76% were members of minority groups, 22% were female, 94% were high school dropouts, and 88% came from low-income families. The project also made special efforts to recruit young women and those with dependent children by working with the local YWCA, a local women's center, a local women's shelter, and programs through the city's Housing Authority.

Analysis of demographic data that was available in August 2001 showed that of the 88 trainees who had enrolled in YouthBuild:

- graduates ranged in age from 17 to 25 years old;
- 71 (81%) were black; 5 (16%) were Hispanic, and 12 (14%) were white;
- 76 (86%) were high school dropouts; and
- 39 (44%) were offenders.

8. What types of training, employment and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Project clients were not accepted into a separate demonstration project, but became YouthBuild trainees. According to its charter, at least 75% of trainees must come from very low-income families, be high school dropouts who are unemployed, and live in the target area.
Before they are formally accepted, potential YouthBuild trainees participate in a two-week orientation that serves as a trial period to determine if the program suits them and if clients are suitable for the program. If clients are then accepted into the project, or don't drop out at orientation, they begin eight months of training.

The program is five days a week and starts at 8 a.m. with physical training and other small-group gatherings. Educational or on-the job training follow. Monday through Thursday, training ends with closing at 4:30 p.m. Fridays, however, are half-days in which trainees participate in a community service project.

YouthBuild training is based on clearly defined competencies, and measurement standards, established by the national YouthBuild program. To graduate from the program, trainees are assessed on their ability to meet the competencies, which consider the quality of work performed, effort, values expressed, and skills developed. Before graduation, trainees compile portfolios of their work and submit them to a review panel to determine if they have demonstrated sufficient progress to graduate.

In the case of Rockford, trainees were paid a base amount ($190 a week) for attending classes and participating in work projects. The amount increased incrementally up to $220. In addition, an Individual Development Account (IDA) was established for each trainee. Money was deposited into the account when trainees reached certain milestones. When trainees attained a GED, for example, $200 was put into their IDAs. Trainees could access the account for employment, education, housing or transportation needs.

In past cycles, students were broken into teams for construction and manufacturing training — four construction teams and one manufacturing team in 2000. In fall 2001, project officials planned to add a track for computer technology training.

The project limited participation of 16 year olds who, with 17 year olds, constituted about 10% of total project enrollment. The project director believed that bringing too many younger clients into the program created problems and affected the other efforts to keep them from dropping out of school.

The project manager believed that YouthBuild in itself served as a gang-suppression program. It did this primarily by keeping youth engaged and preventing idleness.

Data supplied by the project on 88 trainees who had enrolled in YouthBuild since the project began showed that:

- 35 (40%) graduates held permanent full-time jobs;
- 24 (27%) had completed their education;
- 5 (6%) had entered college; and
- 2 (2%) were incarcerated.

After trainees graduated they were followed officially for three months, although this period often was extended, especially if graduates were having job or personal problems. Graduates also became members of an alumni association that maintained contact with them.

The project faced several problems involving clients that limited its ability to place them into jobs. These included:

- **Lack of Educational Attainment.** The low educational attainment of trainees posed a formidable barrier. Although the project experienced some success in helping trainees obtain a GED and raise their reading and math scores, their abilities often were still below those required for entry-level jobs.

- **Endemic Substance Abuse.** Some clients were released from their jobs because they tested positive for drug use. To confront this problem, the project added a substance abuse class that attempted to impress on clients the importance of remaining drug free, especially if they were to hold jobs. Project officials also were working to gain resources for assessing clients and then treating them. It was difficult to place clients in drug treatment programs because they were full. Of 25 referrals that the project made, only one client was admitted for treatment.

- **Childcare Issues.** These sometimes led to frequent absenteeism, especially among females. Up to 25% of females enrolled in the project were parents.

- **Poor Attendance and Retention.** On average, the project reported that the attendance rate for the past five years was 85%. The project's overall completion rate was about 60%, although 70% of those who enrolled in the project in fall 1999 graduated.

- **Miscellaneous Personal Problems.** Some trainees worried about having a place to live. Some were homeless or lived in temporary housing and suffered from a lack of parental support or faced childcare and similar family conflicts. Some trainees also had poor health and suffered from mental illnesses and nutritional problems. And, many trainees lacked the skills necessary to make favorable impressions at job interviews.

- **Rejection of Clients.** Some unions and employers refused to hire clients because they had felony records or lacked a driver's license.

The YMCA gave YouthBuild an agency membership that provided recreational services to project participants. Such efforts, including those by YouthBuild and other churches and service organizations such as Boys and Girls clubs, helped reduce gang involvement by young people living in the community. Unfortunately, however, more formalized efforts at gang prevention were generally lacking in Rockford.

9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?

Trainees had access to their Individual Development Accounts to pay for some services and fees. In addition, the project provided uniforms for trainees that included shirts, jackets, pants, and clothing for construction.

10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

The YODP was envisioned as an enhancement to the well-established YouthBuild program. By summer 2001, it appeared that YouthBuild had met this objective and had effectively used demonstration project funds to improve its performance. It also appeared that there was little doubt among project officials that YouthBuild would continue operating after YODP grant funding ended.

Evaluation site visits confirmed that the YouthBuild staff worked hard to establish a strong funding stream and connections with elements of the workforce development system. Since the YODP began, the project has received two grants from HUD worth $1.3 million, $170,000 through AmeriCorps, and about $180,000 through Rock River Training. In all, YouthBuild receives about $5 million in contributions and in-kind services annually.

The project had in place a strong continuous improvement mechanism that included standardized reports. As a YouthBuild site, it had to meet requirements and standards established by the national YouthBuild program as well as requirements from other local, state, and national organizations that provided funds. Each summer, the program staff also spends eight weeks assessing YouthBuild's performance over the preceding training cycle The staff then makes program changes accordingly.

In general, YouthBuild Rockford had strong political backing from community leaders and officials. They appeared to appreciate its efforts to reach a needy, and somewhat neglected, segment of Rockford's population.

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